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TORIAL

HENRY REDUX

Henry Kissinger has cleverly chosen the perfect moment to attack the Reagan Administration from the right. His two recent articles in *The New York Times* criticizing the bankruptcy of the Haig-Clark-Weinberger policy on Poland have gravely embarrassed a foreign-policy team whose whole justification is tough anti-Communism. Yet why should anyone be surprised that America has done nothing for Poland? Kissinger himself makes no firm recommendations, beyond the usual noises about the need for more unity in the Atlantic alliance.

The truth is that the alliance was divided—by U.S. highhandedness—long before the military coup in Warsaw. Poland has taught us nothing about the feeling in European ranks that we did not know before. Moreover, Washington's main strategy, insofar as it could be said to have one, was predicated upon an outright Soviet invasion. As usual, we were prepared only to fight the last battle.

Kissinger criticizes the farmers and bankers who have been profiting from East-West trade, and warns that they might themselves become hostages to Soviet sanctions one day. But why should business have a consistent foreign policy when the entire Republican ethos is based on the primacy of profit, and when the political leadership has no guiding principles to offer?

At one or two points, Kissinger stumbles on the truth only to pick himself up as if nothing had happened. He comes to the conclusion that there may be areas of the world where the United States may be virtually powerless to affect the course of events. If he had begun with that premise, he might have got a great deal further. The danger now is that the Administration hawks, maddened by the accusation of softness, may do something stupid that would leave the Poles no better off. Judge Clark has confessed that he doesn't know where Zimbabwe is. Why should he be expected to solve a problem that has dogged central Europe for centuries?

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THE A.T.&T. SETTLEMENT

THE PROMISE AND THE PROBLEMS

RONALD BROWNSTEIN

If the settlement of the Justice Department's seven-year case against American Telephone & Telegraph was the end of an era in antitrust law, it was even more surely the beginning of a new age in telecommunications.

The agreement cut a fresh path through a thicket of political and regulatory disputes. For years, Congress and the Federal Communications Commission—prodded by the steadily advancing antitrust case—have been trying to decide how to restructure A.T.&T., which was chafing at restrictions that prevented it from entering the burgeoning field of information services. The agreement made much of what they did obsolete, but it also raises an entirely different set of questions.

As all those affected by the settlement—consumers, potential competitors in the computer and communications businesses, potential suppliers for local telephone companies, state and Federal regulatory officials—scramble to determine exactly what it will mean, a process that will take months and maybe years, more legislative and judicial battles lie ahead. For as surely as A.T.&T. will seek to bend the decision to its advantage, its competitors will ask Congress and the F.C.C. to erect safeguards to protect them against this still-powerful corporate behemoth, whose history of anticompetitive behavior was fully documented by the Justice Department. Legislators concerned about the prospect of sharply higher local telephone rates are already drawing up bills to modify the agreement.

A.T.&T.'s willingness to surrender its local operating companies indicated that it feared

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LETTERS.

BRAVO 'DISPATCHES'

Concord, Calif.

It has been with great pleasure that I have read the *Dispatches* of Elizabeth Farnsworth and Stephen Talbot. I am devoted to *The Nation* and read every issue from cover to cover. However, I still miss *Internews*, and *Dispatches* restores at least in part the excellent service it rendered: giving the reader in succinct form significant items of news not found in the daily press. Somehow Farnsworth and Talbot manage, even in such a brief format, to indicate the meaning of the events they report. Is there any chance of more frequent *Dispatches*?

Jane Castellanos

PRO-PEACE ISRAELIS

Flushing, N.Y.

It was a pleasure to read Lesley Hazleton's fine piece ["The Moderating of Arik Sharon," *The Nation*, Nov. 14, 1981] on Amos Perlmutter's distorted portrayal of Israel's Defense Minister Ariel Sharon in *The New York Times Magazine*. I have no quarrel with one of Israel's most talented journalists, nor with her analysis. I do wish to question the editorial policies of *The Nation*, which repeatedly offer us insights into Israel's militarist, bellicose features while virtually ignoring the not inconsiderable "peace camp" within Israel that has given rise to the likes of Hazleton.

Participants in the Jewish-Israeli/Palestinian-Arab conflict can be divided into three categories. *Rejectionists* seek the national annihilation of the other side. Minority elements within the Palestine Liberation Organization envision a world without a Jewish state; Gush Emunin, Ariel Sharon and Menachem Begin deny the validity of Palestinian national aspirations west of the Jordan River. Then there are the *accommodationists*, those who accept—for idealistic or pragmatic reasons—the legitimacy of both Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian na-

tionalism. Accommodationists divide into the covert and overt varieties. On good days, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres and P.L.O. chief Yasir Arafat will hint at a readiness to reconcile themselves to each other and to the national forces they represent. But most often, their accommodationist leanings remain veiled behind hostile rhetoric; hence, *covert accommodationists*.

Of the *overt accommodationists*, quite a number are found in Israel. Examples include Labor Alignment elements led by Knesset members Yossi Sarid, Victor Shemtov, former Gen. Chaim Bar-Lev and Abba Eban. They have called for negotiations with any Palestinian leader who would renounce (or probably just halt) military operations against Israel; they have denounced the creeping annexation of the West Bank, the Beirut bombing and, as Eban has termed it, the conversion of Camp David's full autonomy to Begin's empty autonomy for Palestinians in the territories.

Reading *The Nation*, one gets the impression that the lunatic right wing is fully in control of Israel's political machinery. One hears nothing of the considerable discontent with the expensive settlement policies among the Oriental Jewish working class; one hears nothing of the Israeli left's trenchant questioning of the raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor and the narrowly based decision-making process that led to it. Nor does one hear of the severe criticism in the mainstream Israeli press of the bombing missions against Palestinian civilians, be they in Beirut or southern Lebanon.

Progressive forces in Israel need the support of like-minded people around the world, especially those in the United States. *The Nation* could do them and the cause of peace a great service by giving its readers an understanding of Israel's peace forces as well as those found within the P.L.O. The former need encouragement to maintain their struggle, while the latter need to begin expressing their private, ambiguous hopes and thoughts in a more overt and clear fashion. We all need to comprehend not only the gloom-inducing obstacles to peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors but the potentialities—small as they might be—for constructing a peace that addresses the conflicting national aspirations of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs.

Steven M. Cohen

C.I.A. TERRORISM

Lewiston, Me.

In a November 28, 1981, editorial, "The C.I.A. and the Rogue Agents," *The Nation* asked:

Suppose some policy makers in Washington had the idea of turning international terrorism to the advantage of U.S. foreign policy. Was there a deliberate attempt by the Central Intelligence Agency to manipulate and even engender terrorism?

The editorial never really answered this question, but perhaps Morton Halperin did in a July 26, 1981, speech at Riverside Church in New York City:

One of the things the Center for National Security Studies does is to request documents under the Freedom of Information Act. The other day we got an old document from the 1950s: It was the document that launched the CIA into covert operations. We had the document given to us a few years ago with some deletions. Now the document came without any deletions. One of the phrases that had been left out (I think when the government discovers it they will regret having put it back in) was the phrase describing the kinds of covert operations the CIA is to engage in: "the support of terrorism around the world." When the Secretary of State told us that terrorism was the great threat, what I think he meant was that our failure to use terrorism was the great threat!

Copies of Halperin's remarks may be obtained from: Riverside Church Disarmament Program, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Robert Moyer

A POINT WELL MADE?

New York City

Senator Bill Bradley deserves credit for his courageous and principled defense of the Bill of Rights, as noted in "The Guardians" [*The Nation*, January 2-9]. But I believe in applying credit where it is due and not for the sake of a neat metaphor. For all his talent on the court, Bradley, while a New York Knick, was not "the man his teammates looked for when they needed a big play with time running out and the game on the line." That person was Walt "Clyde" Frazier. Bradley was relied upon for his consistency and selflessness. His trademark was the jump shot from the farthestmost reaches of the baseline. Without flash or fanfare, he would separate himself from the defender assigned to him, position himself unobtrusively, take a pass and score. His dedication, intelligent ballplaying and willingness to work for the best possible shot won as many games (if not more) for the Knicks as did Frazier's flamboyant and dramatic last-minute heaves. What we have seen in the case of this filibuster is another Bradley score from the outer edge. True, this did occur in the closing moments of a very important game. But what made it a characteristic Bradley action was that, like his sideline shot, which had to swish through the rim in order to score, it was highly effective, but not noisy.

David Corn

CORRECTION

Due to an editing error in Edward Mortimer's article ["Is Islam Anti-Semitic?" *The Nation*, Dec. 5, 1981], the number of Arabs who fled their homes in Palestine in 1948 was incorrectly given. There were less than a million refugees at that time. There are now more than 2 million Palestinians living in exile, but many of them were born in exile and thus are only indirect victims of the 1948 conflict. Finally, the 1948 exodus involved many Christians as well.

—The Editors

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double-spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

Sound and Fury

Judging from recent news reports, one might think that India had suddenly reverted to the days of emergency rule, otherwise known as the "Indira Raj." Several dozen prominent trade union leaders were arrested last week under the preventive detention provisions of the National Security Act. Nearly 25,000 people, including labor activists and opposition leaders, were jailed for several days in anticipation of a general strike called for January 19. In the state of Bihar, where the late Jayaprakash Narayan's anti-Indira Gandhi movement began in 1974, the pro-Gandhi government issued statements that anyone pressuring "loyalist" workers would be shot. The one-day general strike on January 19 virtually closed down the fac-

tories of Bombay and Calcutta.

This challenge to Prime Minister Gandhi's rule came on the second anniversary of her return to power, after voters threw out a discredited hodgepodge of opposition groups loosely organized under the banner of the Janata Party. If the election represented a rejection of the Janata's incompetence, it did not give Gandhi a mandate to repeat the excesses of her 1975-76 Emergency government. No one, then or now, would defend her compulsory sterilization programs, for instance. But think again. Last week, as the Prime Minister was ordering the arrest of the organizers of the January 19 strike, she resurrected her twenty-point economic package (slightly altered from Emergency days), which, among other things, included an intensified birth-control program. *There the analogies to the Emergency period run out.*

Inflation and a rising tide of sectarian violence may well have disillusioned many Indians who had hoped that Gandhi's return to power would at least restore a semblance of order to a troubled nation.

But this unrest does not yet portend the end of Indira. "Large-scale unrest, by itself," writes Nikhil Chakravartty, editor of the left-wing weekly *Mainstream*, "does not lead to the toppling of a government unless there is a credible leadership to galvanize it." No such leadership is visible today. The left opposition is in large measure divided against itself and tactically, if not ideologically, bankrupt. As Chakravartty acidly observes, "The Indian left forgot that outside the precincts of parliamentary politics, they have a world to remould—the world of India's teeming millions, impoverished but expectant."

This even holds true in West Bengal, where a leftist coalition has controlled the state government for many years. Samar Sen, the editor of the astute Calcutta weekly *Frontier*, put it bluntly in a recent letter to us:

The result of pseudo-social democracy has been a general loss of militancy whereby even legitimate movements are dubbed a conspiracy against the left. But the vote bank is more or less secure for lack of an alternative. The Congress (I) [the Congress Party faction backing Indira Gandhi] in West Bengal is a wretched, divided lot. Nevertheless, the specter that haunts the West Bengal Left Front Government is the unpredictable Mrs. Gandhi, with her penchant for toppling non-Congress (I) ministries. The irony of it all is that the left parties in Parliament, including the CPI (Marxist), paved the way for her dramatic return to power by ganging up in late 1979 against the Morarji Desai Cabinet, which more or less left the states their autonomous powers. The main danger then, in the CPI (M)'s view, was communalism as represented by Jan Sangh-RSS [Hindu chauvinist] elements in the Janata government. Now it is the authoritarianism of Mrs. Gandhi. But in foreign policy matters—Afghanistan, Cambodia, arms for Pakistan, a dispute over a little island in the Bay of Bengal—the CPI (M) sides with her.

It is therefore almost pointless to enter into an ideological analysis of the situation, because there is no radical alternative emerging. That some foreign economists, after conducted visits to showpieces, return starry-eyed over the Marxist experiment in West Bengal is another matter. The civility of the CPI (M) state ministers can be no substitute for class struggle.

Social unrest in India is likely only to grow in the coming

months, particularly if Gandhi continues to rely on the excessive powers granted to her under the National Security Act. But the real tragedy is that there does not yet seem to be any progressive alternative.

Question-Ducking

Ever since the Supreme Court stopped knocking down New Deal economic regulations and started protecting civil rights and civil liberties, conservatives have vociferously complained about judicial activism. From right-wing ideologues to such noted legal scholars as Alexander Bickel, the critics of an active judiciary have sung the praises of what Bickel called "the passive virtues" of judicial restraint. In a series of recent decisions, however, the Court's knee has bent so deep in deference to the executive branch that it is in danger of losing its balance.

Two years ago, the Court imposed a severe penalty on former C.I.A. agent Frank Snepp for publishing a book without the agency's clearance, and it did so without hearing any arguments on whether the employment contract Snepp had signed, which gave the agency the right of prior review, violated the First Amendment. Just a few weeks ago, in holding that ordinary citizens don't have standing to challenge government aid to religion, Justice William Rehnquist announced that the Court would no longer be an "ombudsman of the general welfare."

In two other recent opinions the Court's refusal to consider constitutional issues stands out in bold relief. By a vote of 6 to 3, the Court overturned lower court decisions and let stand a Virginia man's forty-year sentence for the possession and sale of nine ounces of marijuana. In doing so, as Anthony Lewis eloquently noted in *The New York Times*, it again ducked the constitutional argument—whether such a sentence violated the prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment.

The Court also denied certiorari on an appeal by David Truong, a refugee from Vietnam now living in the United States who was active in the antiwar movement. Thus, it failed to take up the government's disturbing claim that in foreign intelligence investigations it is not bound by the warrant requirement of the Fourth Amendment, which forbids unlawful searches and seizures. Truong was convicted of, among other charges, the "Ellsberg offense"—stealing government property (in this case, State Department documents) worth more than \$100. Since the lower courts would not consider whether the information had been properly classified, the Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case left standing an interpretation of the criminal law that would make felons of both the leaker and the receiver of "national defense information"—even if that information was already public or had been classified to cover up a crime.

The only thing that can be said in favor of this aggressive passivity is that if the Court did live up to its responsibilities to face these issues, the result would probably provide little satisfaction to those who believe in the Constitution.

THE NATION IN COURT

On Monday, January 25, *The Nation* will appear in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York in the case of *Harper & Row and Reader's Digest v. The Nation*. The suit was brought after *The Nation* published in its April 7, 1979, issue a news story on President Gerald Ford's pardon of Richard Nixon, based on an advance copy of Ford's memoirs. The book's publishers claim copyright infringement. *The Nation* argues that its story is protected by both the "fair use" doctrine of the copyright laws and the First Amendment.

CENTRAL AMERICA WATCH.

Tensions along the Nicaraguan-Honduran border flared anew earlier this month when Honduran military authorities accused troops of the Sandinist Army of having crossed into Honduran territory and "massacring" 200 Miskito Indian refugees. Honduran Foreign Minister Cesar Elvir Sierra, who announced the alleged massacre on January 4, said that his government was preparing a formal protest.

Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto has denounced the charges as "absurd and ridiculous." Nicaragua recently filed at least two protests of its own with the Honduran government charging that Honduran military officials have ties with former members of Anastasio Somoza's National Guard and other antigovernment groups. On December 28 a Honduran Air Force plane crashed, killing five people and injuring at least thirty others. Among the dead was Steadman Fagoth, a Nicaraguan Indian leader and an opponent of the Sandinist regime.

The Honduran military learned about the massacre of the Miskitos, they said, from refugees in the area where the killings allegedly occurred. But not everyone agrees with the refugees' version of the story. On January 6, Honduran Interior Minister Oscar Mejia Arellano called reports of a massacre "totally false," adding that there had been "no problem" with the refugees and "not one single death." Two days later, the Honduran Foreign Ministry revised its original statement, saying that the Indians had been killed inside Nicaragua. The U.S. State Department was unable to confirm either version, but a spokesman said that "there was an event that involved the murder of a significant number of Miskitos. We know of about eight."

The charges of the Nicaraguan incursion into Honduras take on special importance in light of recent claims by the Reagan Administration that Nicaragua has become a "platform for intervention" in Central America. On December 15, Under Secretary of Defense Fred Ikle told the Senate that "Nicaragua is regularly violating Honduran territory by its support for the Salvadoran guerrillas." Ikle cited the obligations that nations in the region have under the Rio Treaty (officially known as the Inter-American Reciprocal Defense Treaty), which provides for collective defense.

■ In the same testimony, Ikle also revealed that "other concerned Latin American countries" were assisting the effort to cut off outside aid to the Salvadoran guerrillas. One such "concerned" country is Argentina, which began training small numbers of Salvadoran officers last year. Unconfirmed reports that there are Argentine advisers in El Salvador have circulated since last spring, when then-President Roberto Viola spoke of the "total coincidence" of Argentine and U.S. policy in Central America.

Since then, several U.S. and Salvadoran officials have traveled to Buenos Aires, including U.S. Army Chief of Staff Edward Meyer in April and Salvadoran Vice President Col. Jaime Abdul Gutiérrez in May. The key figures in

establishing the Argentine connection, however, appear to be State Department adviser Gen. Vernon Walters and Gen. Leopoldo Galtieri, Army Chief of Staff in Argentina, who succeeded the ousted Viola as President last month. Walters and Galtieri met in Buenos Aires in September, at which time Galtieri reportedly offered to send troops to El Salvador. According to accounts in the Argentine press, Salvadoran Defense Minister José Guillermo García confirmed the offer, but stated that "troops are not needed at the moment." Walters also asked several other Southern Cone and Andean nations to be prepared to contribute troops to an inter-American peacekeeping force in El Salvador.

■ Although the proposal for an inter-American peacekeeping force was discussed by Walters and Galtieri more than a year ago, the pressure on Washington to act has mounted in recent months. The prospects of the Salvadoran government winning a quick victory over the guerrilla forces have diminished, and Guatemala is on the brink of civil war. The plan has been approved in principle by Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, as well as by Guatemala and El Salvador, while Colombia and Peru have opted for an uncommitted "observer" status. But legal constraints could delay the formation of such a peacekeeping force. When troops were sent to the Dominican Republic in 1965 after civil war broke out between the ruling junta and supporters of ousted President Juan Bosch, they acted under the auspices of the Organization of American States. An attempt by the United States in 1979 to introduce an O.A.S.-backed force into Nicaragua failed to win the necessary votes, however. O.A.S. approval would be required for any collective action taken under the Rio Treaty.

The proposed peacekeeping force would consist of a minimum of 20,000 troops, according to Central American military sources, and they would be deployed in one of two possible ways. The first possibility would be to station a United Nations-style international force in El Salvador before the March 28 elections. The Salvadoran military high command believes that if the elections were held while the government was carrying out a cleanup operation against the guerrillas, it would demonstrate to the world that José Napoleón Duarte's regime is in full control of the country. If the guerrilla forces seek to disrupt the election, it would give the international force an excuse to intervene in the civil war under the guise of protecting "democratic" elections.

The second possibility being discussed is a "hammer and anvil" operation that would position the international force along the Honduran border while the Salvadoran troops pounded north, driving the guerrillas before them. Honduras has already committed heavy air support and 300 members of its special counterinsurgency force, the TESON, to the effort. Both the United States and Argentina have stepped up their contributions to the Honduran military.

ARTICLES.

■ IRAN REVISITED

The Sidetracking Of a Revolution

RICHARD FALK



In the peculiar afterglow of U.S.-Iranian relations one year after the American hostages were released, official comment from Washington about developments in Iran has virtually ceased. And, predictably, the mainstream media has followed suit. As a result, public awareness of the situation in Iran is as dim now as it was during the Shah's time. We cannot explain this turning away from Iran by the absence of newsworthiness. A turbulent revolution winds on, passing through a particularly bloody phase, and Iran continues to be involved in a drawn-out war with Iraq that could have a significant effect on the balance of power in the Middle East.

The earlier neglect of Iran came about largely because the Shah devoted millions of dollars to a public-relations campaign in the United States that concealed the repressiveness of his regime. Moreover, U.S. leaders were reluctant to call attention to the failings of a vital ally. The current neglect reflects an official U.S. indifference to a repression whose victims are progressives, and an unacknowledged hope that Washington might yet reach an accord with the new leadership in Iran. Incidentally, Moscow appears to be pursuing, with somewhat greater success, a parallel diplomatic course.

In many respects, sad to say, Iran is worse off now than it was under the Shah. Certainly many more Iranians are being killed for political opposition, often on the flimsiest of charges. There are more political prisoners and a tighter ideological straitjacket. One major social effect has been the closing of advanced schools, denying Iranians the benefits of higher education. In short, Khomeini has established a rule that is as brutal and repressive as the Shah's. At the same time, it would be a mistake with reactionary implications to read too much into this comparison.

The revolution in Iran was a popular upsurge of opposition to the Shah and his policies that had the support of virtually the entire Iranian population. By late 1978, it had become an irresistible force. However harsh their lives are now, few, if any, of the participants in that revolution think that the restoration of the monarchy is the proper corrective to the excesses of Khomeini. Indeed, given the severity of the situation in Iran, including the breakdown of the coun-

try's economy, it is remarkable how little support there is for reviving the Pahlevi dynasty.

It is important to understand that the current state of the Iranian revolution was not predestined. It is the result of a struggle in which the fundamentalist elements have temporarily prevailed over the democratic elements. But this struggle is not over, and it will not be resolved in any definitive sense until the situation sorts itself out in the aftermath of Khomeini's death. And so, support for the democratic forces now arrayed against him seems entirely justified. There is no reason to turn one's back on the Iranian revolution or to suppose that Iran's current miseries can be understood as vindicating those reactionaries inside and outside the country who now say, "I told you so."

Like the Russian revolution, the Iranian revolution has had two distinct phases: the initial struggle against the Shah and the subsequent struggle against the democratic forces, which culminated in the events since Abolhassan Bani-Sadr's ouster as President last June. But this second phase of the revolution has still not been consummated. Whether Khomeini can consolidate his power and transmit it to a successor is an open question. Whether the Iranian people will tolerate a ruling process that is both repressive and incapable of organizing the work of social and economic reconstruction is most uncertain.

At this stage, even those who were enthusiastic about the first phase of the Iranian revolution need to take account of the horrors associated with the second phase. Now, to some, this may recall the self-serving claims of McGeorge Bundy when he finally spoke out against the continuing American involvement in Vietnam in a speech at DePauw University in October 1968. The former national security adviser to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson argued there that "the basic decision of 1965, to stand and fight on South Vietnam, was right." The message Bundy wanted to convey was: We were right to fight and then right to stop fighting. In other words, "I'm O.K. I was right both times." Yet the decision to fight in Vietnam was *never* right; it was a matter of intervening with military force to smash a national revolutionary struggle involving the Vietnamese people. It is an entirely different thing to say that it was right to support the Iranian revolution in 1978 and early 1979, because in that case it was a question of Iranian self-determination. Backing the first phase of the Iranian revolution and opposing American intervention in Vietnam are aspects of the same idea—respecting the process of national revolution in the Third World.

Living in Fear

The government in Iran, such as it is, has mounted a virtual reign of terror. Since June of last year, several thousand—some estimates put the number at more than 3,000—Iranians have been executed without fair trials, often for innocuous political protests (e.g., handing out leaflets). Even children have been shot by the regime's firing squads for the "crime" of taking part in peaceful

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demonstrations sponsored by opposition groups.

The constitutionally elected President of the Republic, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, has been declared an outlaw. Those who gave him refuge from his fundamentalist opponents before he escaped to France have been executed. Supporters of the democratic elements in the revolutionary movement have been killed, jailed, driven underground or hounded into exile. Men and women whose militant opposition to the Shah made them "enemies of the state" are now more relentlessly persecuted than they were by Savak.

Accompanying the persecution of the political opposition has been the re-establishment of the old apparatus of repression. The Savama, Khomeini's secret police, uses the same methods, and often the same facilities, that Savak used. It even employs former Savak agents. Torture and official atrocities are widespread. Censorship and state control of the media stifle dissent. There is no outlet for opposition viewpoints. The Islamic Republican Party (I.R.P.) dominates political life as completely as the Shah's Rasta-Khiz Party did. The only other parties allowed to exist are the Tudeh (Communist) Party and the majority faction of the Fedayeen Khalq, the Marxist guerrilla organization. They have been tolerated so far only because they have given their unconditional support to the Khomeini leadership, including its purge of democratic elements and its bloody repression.

Official terror and intimidation have created a widespread climate of fear in Iran. Women are now subjugated under a rigid code of Islamic law. Members of the Bahai sect have been persecuted, and late last year an effort was made to kill all its leaders. Ethnic minorities are governed at gunpoint, and the Kurdish people in particular have been massacred under the protective cover of the war with Iraq.

Khomeini's endorsement of the seizure of the American hostages in November 1979 was a costly mistake. For fourteen months the hostages were detained without formal charges, threatened with trial and only released after a prolonged haggling over money with the United States. The incident damaged Iran's diplomatic and financial standing in the world. It meant that Khomeini had given his blessing to lawless behavior justified in the name of the revolution. And the hostage-taking had a crucial political effect: it placed Khomeini definitively on the side of the I.R.P. in its deepening power struggle with Bani-Sadr.

In addition, Khomeini's provocative calls for revolution throughout the Islamic world and, particularly, for an uprising in neighboring Iraq, drove Iran into deeper diplomatic isolation, helping to create a favorable climate for Iraq's attack in September 1980. The war has caused considerable damage to Iran's oil refineries, and cost it some valuable territory—not to mention the more than 2 million Iranians made homeless, the suffering and the loss of life. This futile struggle drags on with no end in sight, draining an already deteriorating economy.

As a result, Iran is on the verge of economic collapse. Only the oil revenues prevent bankruptcy; they also mask severe unemployment by subsidizing do-nothing jobs in the bloated state bureaucracy. The nation's international credit

rating is shaky, yet it must import large quantities of food and distribute it free to prevent mass starvation. After three years in power, the Iranian government has been unable to draw up a program for economic development, and there is none on the horizon. The present leadership, a mélange of zealots and opportunists, has neither the competence nor the patience to deal with the day-to-day work of running a government—let alone to tackle the pressing problems of social, political and economic reconstruction. The "revolutionary institutions"—the religious courts, komitehs (local committees) and revolutionary guards—remain a law unto themselves, an alternative power structure that administers revolutionary "justice" [see Kai Bird, "Making Iran Safe for Theocracy," *The Nation*, May 19, 1979]. These institutions, which grew up spontaneously in the early spring of 1979, are loyal only to Khomeini and exercise their authority in an arbitrary and often cruel fashion. They are generally run by the mullahs and have become increasingly repressive. Today the heads of these expanding institutions often ignore formal governmental procedures and routinely invoke their superior allegiance to the person of Khomeini as justification for repressive activities. Khomeini, in turn, often praises them as the heart and soul of the revolutionary process. It remains unclear to what extent he instigated this system of dual government and to what extent he felt obliged to endorse its operations in order to preserve his own power.

The Broken Promise

The tragic turn that the Iranian revolution has taken calls for comment and interpretation, especially by those who, like myself, welcomed it in the early days and regarded Khomeini's leadership, on the whole, positively. I do not believe that a charge of political naïveté is in order. Our support was not simply another "political pilgrimage" of idealistic intellectuals who were duped by their sinister hosts; nor does it call for recantations comparable to the denunciations of Stalinist distortions collected in *The God that Failed*. Unlike those who celebrated the achievements of the Russian revolution well into the 1930s, and beyond in some cases, long after its democratic prospects had been shattered, progressive supporters of the Iranian revolution have identified all along with its democratic promise. The coalition that emerged victorious in Iran had a strong democratic component, whose aspirations seemed central to the revolution. Khomeini appeared to support these aspirations, and there was no evidence that he was being hypocritical. Rather, he seemed to be a man who said what he believed without fear of the consequences.

But an internal struggle developed in the post-Shah period between the democrats and the religious fascists, and it continues to the present day. Even in retrospect, it cannot be said that the victory of religious fascism was assured. Nor was it a foregone conclusion that Khomeini would throw his support behind the clerics. Now that the antidemocratic element has gained the upper hand, however, and the democratic forces have become the illegal opposition, continued support for the revolution implies severe criticism of the present leadership and its policies. To oppose Khomeini

is to resume the campaign on behalf of democracy, human rights and self-determination begun during the Shah's reign.

I do not believe that the course of the Iranian revolution confirms Crane Brinton's theory of "the natural history of revolutions," which holds that state terror is the inevitable outcome of mass uprisings, violent seizure of power and imposition of radical social programs. The failure of the Iranian revolution to live up to the hopes that many held for it was not predictable from the outset. To be sure, there were those who prophesied calamity, but most of them had pro-Shah sympathies or Western biases and wanted to discredit the revolution by every means possible. The most persuasive and politically credible expressions of pessimism came from those students of Iranian culture who doubted whether democracy could suddenly be installed after centuries of dynastic rule, especially in view of the early signs of dissension within the anti-Shah movement and its failure to agree in advance on a postrevolutionary program of development and reconstruction. Yet other equally well-informed scholars pointed to the constitutional movements of 1906-11 and 1951-53 as evidence that there was a growing popular sentiment for democracy in Iran, even among the highest-ranking clergymen.

Nor do I believe that Iran's descent into terror during the last two years can be attributed to the inherently reactionary nature of Islam, or that it was a necessary adjunct of clerical influence. Islam, in common with other great religions, embraces progressive social, political, economic and cultural ideals, as well as reactionary tendencies. Revolutionary leaders, including Khomeini, emphasized the religion's progressive side during the struggle against the Shah. Furthermore, the main opposition to Khomeini now comes from devout Moslems, especially those in the People's Mujahedeen, who find a mandate for democracy and Islamic socialism in the Koran. The Iranian clergy is deeply split on the direction the revolution has taken. Khomeini's own grandson said some months ago that the great majority of mullahs and ayatollahs supported Bani-Sadr's constitutional moderation rather than Khomeini's theocratic fascism. At present, five of the eight grand ayatollahs are opposed, in varying degrees, to Khomeini's policies. Thus it is not helpful to describe the current political situation in Iran as a struggle between religious and secular views of the state or even as a contest for power between clerics and nonclerics.

Khomeini's Ambiguous Role

The truth, rather, is located somewhere in the dark genius of Ayatollah Khomeini himself. This aged leader has dominated Iran since he returned from exile in late January 1979. His presence stirred an intense devotion among the Iranian people. To them he was an awesome figure who embodied both religious authority and extraordinary political achievements. The Iranians saw the revolution as a miracle wrought by the purity of Khomeini's inspirational leadership. Only divine intervention could have enabled him to defeat the Shah's superior forces with no

outside help and without touching off a civil war.

This veneration aside, Khomeini's ideas about the goals of the revolution were unclear. At the time of the victory over the Shah in February 1979, he was generally perceived as the symbol of the revolution, but not its voice or even its permanent leader. During his exile in Paris, Khomeini had repeatedly said that when he returned to Iran he would resume his religious and devotional life in Qum and entrust the administration of the Islamic Republic to political figures. There was no reason to doubt his assertions. And, indeed, Khomeini did return to Qum, although he never completely withdrew from the political scene. From the outset of the post-Shah period, Khomeini prevented the secular leaders from operating independently of his direct, day-to-day supervision. Even when he was in Qum, he openly derided Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, whom he had appointed, making it impossible for the legal head of government to govern from Teheran. In the early months of 1979, Bazargan's Cabinet frequently journeyed to the holy city to seek guidance from the Ayatollah on every important question, thereby confirming their political weakness.

During this period, the Ayatollah seemed to be attempting to curb revolutionary excesses, or at least to be breasting the waves of popular emotion. Periodically, he would seek to revive flagging revolutionary ardor, conjuring up enemies to galvanize the masses. He sometimes chided officials for their failure to govern effectively. At other times, he would undermine the credibility of democratic elements among the leadership so that they became all the more ineffectual. At still other times, he would call for a consensus and seem to be seeking a balance between antagonistic factions.

Through the spring of 1980, Khomeini seemed bent upon insuring that the revolution did not lose its original fervor. True, he had from the beginning supported the idea of a dual government—the informal komitehs, courts and revolutionary guards on one hand and the constitutional organs of government on the other—thereby making it impossible for the elected leaders to function. Whether he did this primarily to undermine the government's authority or because he believed that the revolution should be entrusted to those who had taken the greatest risks in the fighting was never clear. One supposes, on the basis of circumstantial evidence, that both considerations were involved.

Even in relation to the new Iranian Constitution, Khomeini's role was ambiguous. Bani-Sadr's supporters now believe that one of their major mistakes was to insist that the liberal Constitution that was approved in June 1979 be revised by an elected Assembly of Experts. Khomeini, they say, had been willing to accept this version, but they had demanded greater democratic participation in the establishment of the new political order. The revised text, adopted the following November, contained a provision calling for "the governance of the *faqih*," which was introduced at the request of the assembly. The *faqih* provision gave Khomeini extraordinary supervisory powers, including the right to dismiss any official and final authority over the decision to go to war. In effect, the *faqih* was a dictator. Once it had

been proposed, Khomeini fully endorsed this grant of personal power.

At the time, few Iranians were prepared to raise any objections that might cast doubt on the trustworthiness of Khomeini. Nonetheless, many of them were deeply disturbed by the creation of the *faqih*, regarding it as an ominous regression. The office seemed inconsistent with the principal goal of the revolution, forcefully supported by Khomeini himself during his years in exile, which was to end the long tradition of absolute and arbitrary state power.

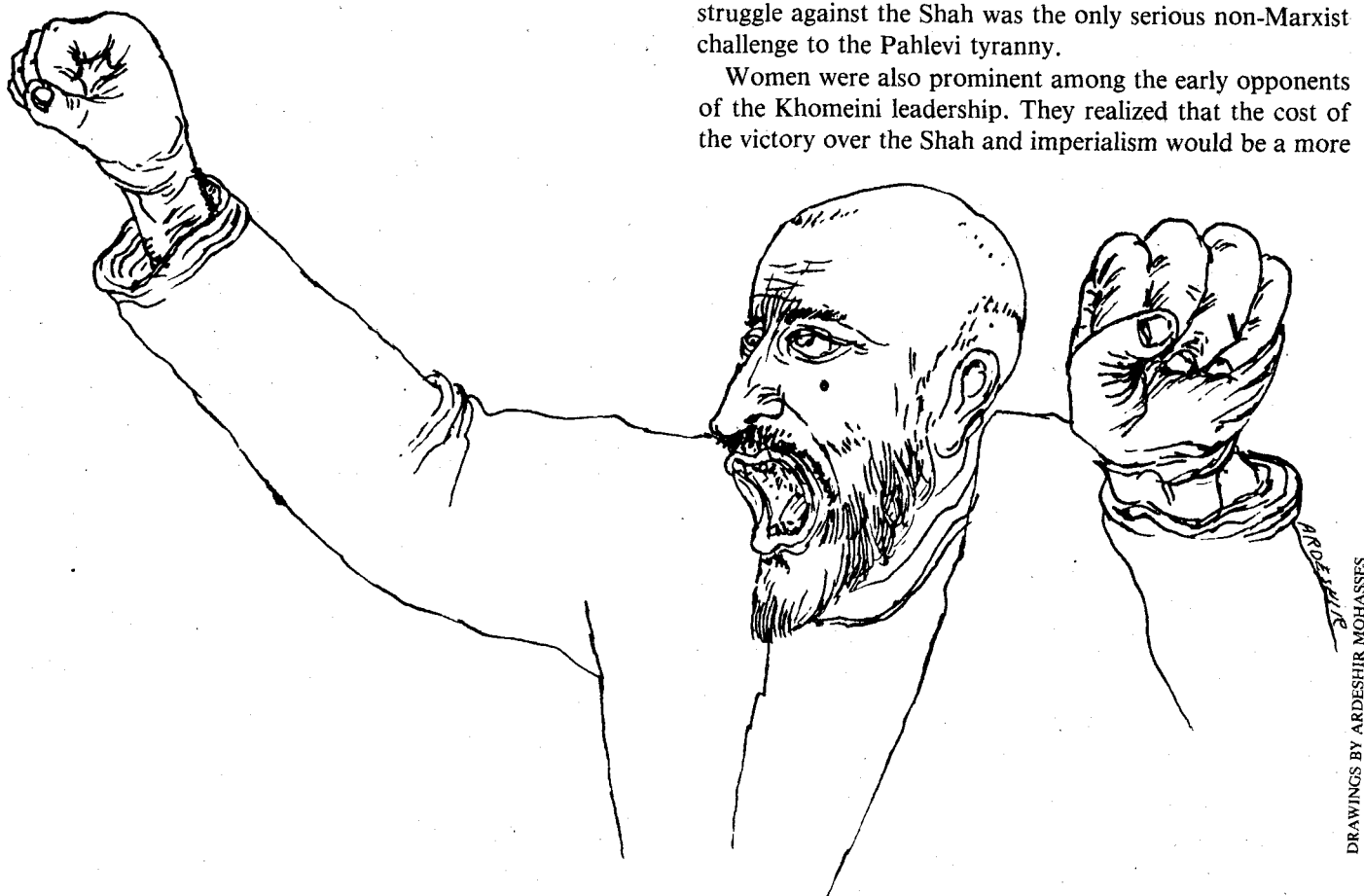
The Revolution's Critics

As I have mentioned, some observers of the Iranian scene regarded the revolution as a species of religious fascism even before the Shah's regime collapsed. Their outlook was for the most part shaped by a belief in the superiority of Western-style economic and political development, by a general antagonism to mixing politics with religion and by a deep antipathy to Khomeini, whom they saw (correctly) as the embodiment of this popular upsurge of the Iranian people. For instance, Stephen Rosenfeld wrote in *The Washington Post* on January 5, 1979, about "the darker forces of Islam" at work in the revolution and called for the U.S. government to oppose them: "The 'new' elements at work there are no improvement—quite the contrary—on the old elements being swept away." And Michael Ledeen, in an article in *The Wall Street Journal* (which, curiously, appeared on the same day) entitled "Khomeini's Theocratic Vision" did not mince words, calling Khomeini "a clerical fascist, a violent anti-Semite, and an intensely chauvinistic anti-American." These writers, and several others at the

time, were obviously completely opposed to the Iranian revolution and, at minimum, believed that the Shah's rule was sufficiently beneficial to the United States to warrant its continued support, no matter what the Iranian people felt. The critics of Khomeini supported their arguments with some controversial texts drawn from his lectures while he was in Iraq. Their tone and contents were disavowed at the time by Khomeini's closest advisers and seemed more than offset by the Ayatollah's own clarifications of his position to visitors and journalists. The virulence of these early attacks on Khomeini were, in other words, largely ideologically motivated attempts to discredit the Iranian revolution by writers who were disturbed by the impending fall of the Shah.

There were, of course, many Iranian opponents of the Shah who were wary from the beginning about the Islamic nature of the revolution and Khomeini's reactionary views. Most notable among these opponents were the Mujahadeen leaders, who understood that their democratic socialist program would inevitably put them in conflict with the fundamentalists over the meaning of "Islam" in the new order of things. It is not surprising that these idealistic and devout Moslems, who produced many martyrs in the struggle against the Shah, should have become the prime target of Khomeini's repression. The most heated ideological battles since the fall of the Shah have involved who had the right to claim the mandate of Islam, and Khomeini has revealed his absolutist nature by tolerating no challenges to his pre-eminence. It should be recalled that in 1972, Khomeini declared it the "religious duty" of every Moslem Iranian to support the Mujahadeen. This was a time when their armed struggle against the Shah was the only serious non-Marxist challenge to the Pahlavi tyranny.

Women were also prominent among the early opponents of the Khomeini leadership. They realized that the cost of the victory over the Shah and imperialism would be a more



DRAWINGS BY ARDESHIR MOHASSES

repressive social code in the name of Islam. The first important anti-Khomeini demonstration in Iran was organized by fearful but courageous progressive Iranian women. And it is interesting that Khomeini's defection from the facade of democratic commitment was first revealed to the outside world in an interview with Oriana Fallaci in Qum that was published in *The New York Times Magazine* on October 7, 1979. The interview is one more proof of Fallaci's ability to force even a stone to make fascinating, often embarrassing, statements. Khomeini is "provoked" into saying such revealing things as "Cheering, for me, means to love freedom and democracy." When questioned about the dangers to the revolution's democratic promise, Khomeini responds with the fury that was later transformed into bloody repression: "If you foreigners do not understand, too bad for you. It's none of your business, you have nothing to do with our choices. If some Iranians don't understand it, too bad for them. It means that they have not understood Islam."

Among early opponents of Khomeini, the moderate Shi'ite clergy, most prominently Ayatollah Kazem Shariat Madari, deserve particular mention. Despite their participation in the revolution against the Shah, they were disturbed from the outset by Khomeini's apparent resolve to insinuate fundamentalist ideas and clerics into the governing process. Also active among early critics were constitutionally-minded followers of the National Front (the remnant of former Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh's movement of the early 1950s) and several groups on the secular left, including the minority of the Fedayeen Khalq. These various elements were, it is fair to say, never taken in by Khomeini's promises that a pluralistic democracy would replace the Shah's tyranny.

Khomeini's Intentions

In a recent conversation Bani-Sadr told me he now believes that Khomeini adopted a liberal facade after coming to Paris in 1978 in order to make the Iranian revolution more palatable to world opinion. Upon returning to Iran, he gradually abandoned this facade. Bani-Sadr even argues that in order to pass himself off as a liberal, Khomeini needed the support of exiled Iranian intellectuals like himself, who were living in Paris. Actually, Khomeini expressed democratic views before he arrived in Paris, and he continued to do so after he had returned to Iran. For instance, during a May 1978 interview in Najaf, Iraq, with Lucien George of *Le Monde*, Khomeini spoke of his hatred of tyranny and his commitment to democratic liberties and political pluralism. Indeed, he made it seem that these ideals were the essence of the revolution. Consider his condemnation of the Shah's government: "His is a dictatorial regime: individual liberties have been swept aside; the press, political parties and authentic elections have been suppressed. Deputies are imposed by the Shah in violation of the constitution; religious and political meetings forbidden; cultural freedom and the independence of courts do not exist any more." At the close of the interview he said, "A genuine liberalization is impossible so long as the Shah remains on the throne." Granted, he was addressing the West, but the tenor of the interview did not seem opportunistic. He not

only attacked both superpowers but discouraged potential allies by insisting that the struggle against the Shah did not warrant cooperation with Marxists. He called upon all Moslems to support the Palestinians and insisted that no compromise with royal rule was acceptable. He was speaking to the world in a needlessly controversial manner as a powerless figure at a time when protests against the Shah seemed to be exercises in futility.

On December 29, 1978, in an interview with Hamid Algar, a prominent U.S. authority on Iran who was sympathetic with the revolution, Khomeini described his political method as "one of education and guidance." As late as January 2, 1980, he was on record as opposing direct clerical rule. "The religious scholar will have a role in government. He does not want to be the ruler, but he does want to have a role," he said. On another occasion, he said that it was essential for religious leaders "to guide the people in all matters." Khomeini certainly believed all along that for the revolution to retain its Islamic values it was necessary that religious leaders play a prominent role, but up until the latter half of 1981, he insisted that they remain in the background.

From November 4, 1979, when the American hostages were seized, until June 21, 1981, when Bani-Sadr was dismissed as President, Khomeini increasingly sided with the most reactionary tendencies in the revolution and rejected appeals for moderation and the institutionalization of authority. By opposing governmental efforts to resolve the hostage crisis, Khomeini isolated Bani-Sadr and his supporters. In the spring of 1981, Khomeini backed the Islamic Republican Party's exclusive leadership, even though that meant endorsing clerical rule.

In this period, antigovernment terrorism increased, taking the lives of many religious figures. The most spectacular incident was the July bomb blast at I.R.P. headquarters, which killed seventy-two persons, including Ayatollah Mohammed Beheshti, head of the party, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the guiding light of the anti-Bani-Sadr forces. With Khomeini's blessing, the government launched a campaign of bloody retaliation against the Islamic left.

Thus, Khomeini only gradually revealed his support for repressive government in Iran. Massoud Rajavi, Prime Minister in Bani-Sadr's exile government and chief of the People's Muhahedeen, told me recently that Khomeini's reactionary politics should have been apparent all along from his fundamentalist religious views. Bani-Sadr, however, feels that Khomeini's insecurity as a religious leader and his need to gain the support of other ayatollahs explain his subsequent actions. In Bani-Sadr's view, Khomeini feared he would lose his pre-eminent role unless he delivered secular power to the clergy. Both Rajavi and Bani-Sadr agree that Khomeini has become a tyrant who must be opposed at all costs if the revolution is to be saved. They compare Khomeini unfavorably to both the Shah and Hitler. It is not that his methods are more brutal, they say, but that Khomeini has also destroyed the economic well-being of the nation.

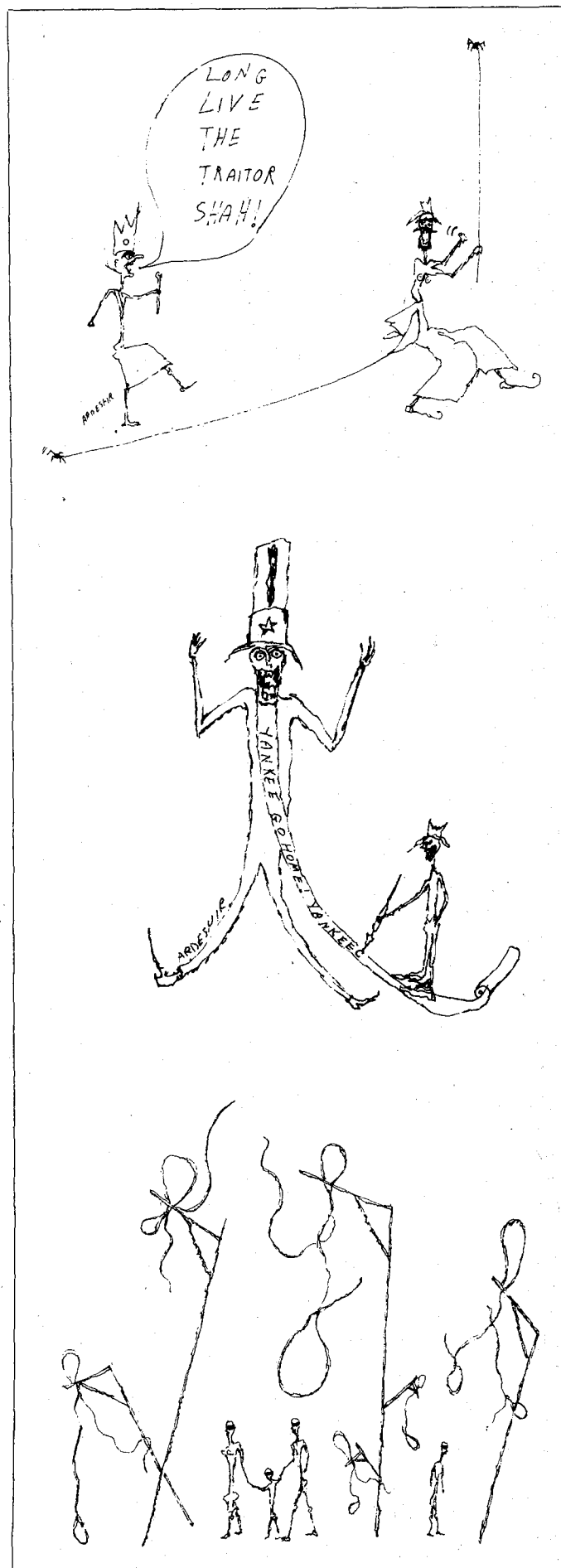
The interpretations of Khomeini's motives by the left are not much more convincing than those by the right. While his leadership has been based on calculated ambiguity, there is no reason to conclude that he has dissembled; he has put forth his views often without regard for their effect on his popularity, though with considerable tactical ingenuity. We must assume that he did envision a democratic Islamic Republic, although he may never have thought through the concrete problems of reconciling his theories of guidance by religious scholars with the requirements of democracy.

More to the point, Khomeini had been living in exile since 1963, and he had lost touch with the diverse factions in the Iranian revolutionary movement. He may well have overestimated its unity. After the fall of the Shah, various kinds of factionalism emerged. The non-Persian minorities, taking advantage of the weakened condition of the state, immediately pressed their threatening demands for autonomy. Various leftist groups attacked Khomeini as a reactionary. Many of the revolution's most loyal supporters grew impatient with the politics of the urban constitutionalists in Mehdi Bazargan's government and demanded more radical leadership. Khomeini may well have shared their views, while also sensing that the preservation of his own position required him to side with the radicals. Indeed, he may have come to believe that only he could keep the revolution on track, that all other leaders were too weak or that they would deviate from the divinely ordained Islamic path. Another factor influencing him may have been his belief as a Shiite in martyrdom as the clearest vindication of earthly behavior, inclining him toward the view that constant confrontations and great risks were necessary to keep the revolutionary process healthy. Finally, Khomeini may have been pushed by rightist factions in the clergy, who knew that they must consolidate their power while he was still alive.

The full truth remains hidden. We know only that the revolution had a democratic promise. It has not followed a foreordained course to destruction; rather, it has been hijacked, or at least sidetracked. Khomeini sided with the hijackers, and very possibly he masterminded the entire operation. But the Iranian revolution is not over, and the main democratic forces have organized themselves into a provisional government under Bani-Sadr and Rajavi. The pro-Khomeini left, consisting of the Tudeh Party and the majority faction of the Fedayeen Khalq, may be biding its time, waiting patiently to make a bid for power—possibly with indirect Soviet support—if the I.R.P. government should collapse. The monarchists still cling to the dream of returning to power, either in league with the military or with such compromised nationalist forces as the followers of the Shah's last Prime Minister, Shahpur Bakhtiar. And we know that foreign powers, including the United States, have not yet written Iran off.

Iran After Khomeini

The situation, at present, is murky. It is difficult to estimate the extent of Khomeini's popular support, although knowledgeable observers say that it has dwindled to between 20 percent and 35 percent of the population.



There is widespread agreement that Khomeini's death will touch off a new struggle for power. There is no obvious successor or plausible alternative to this 81-year-old man. Ayatollah Beheshti might have had the ability to carry on, but even that was not entirely certain. There are no established institutional structures or ongoing programs in the government. Khomeini can leave a last will and testament, but it is far from evident whether it will be carried out after he is gone.

At this point, one can imagine three possibilities for post-Khomeini Iran. First, Khomeini could successfully transfer sufficient authority to the I.R.P. to enable the revolution to muddle through on the brink of chaos for several more years. Second, a military coup could occur, with or without a civil war, that would restore a moderate civilian government resembling that of Bakhtiar. Such a government would be conservative in social and economic policy and follow a pro-Western foreign policy. Third, democratic forces could gather enough strength within the military and the clergy to emerge victorious after a struggle that would likely plunge Iran into a period of civil war.

Only this third option would preserve and extend the gains of the Iranian revolution. Despite the failures of Khomeini's leadership, the revolution has maintained its anti-monarchist and anti-imperialist character. In addition, Khomeini's own words, if not the deeds of his regime, lend an aura of legitimacy to his opponents' democratic demands. Even if the Bani-Sadr/Rajavi forces take power, there remains considerable doubt that their alliance could hold together. There is also the question of whether outside powers would stand idly by while the revolution was being put back on a progressive track.

It must be understood that the ease with which Khomeini and the Islamic Republican Party achieved a monopoly of power in Iran was greatly facilitated by the failure of the various democratic elements to form a broadly based coalition that supported concrete proposals for social and economic change. During the crucial year of 1979, while the I.R.P. clerics, relying on the mantle of Khomeini's undisputed leadership, were building a nationwide organization, a dominant propaganda machine and an extensive patronage system, the main democratic personalities and groups were often involved in factional maneuvering to gain Khomeini's temporary support in the ongoing battle for power inside Iran.

Khomeini exploited the rivalries among the democratic elements and eventually eliminated them altogether. If a coalition of democratic forces similar to the National Council of Resistance formed in Paris by Rajavi and Bani-Sadr a few months ago had existed in the early months of 1979, Khomeini and the I.R.P. might not have been able to sidetrack the revolution—certainly not with such apparent ease. It remains, of course, to be discovered whether the democratic elements of the Iranian revolution have learned this essential lesson from the tragic turn of events over the last several months. One thing, though, is clear: without a solid organizational structure and a coherent and carefully spelled-out program, the democratic forces have no realistic prospect of achieving their objectives. Quite possibly, a second

failure on their part would demoralize the democratic constituency in Iran for a long time to come.

Let us hope that Khomeini's own words of late December 1978 will come back to haunt him: "Whenever repression is intensified to an extraordinary degree, the natural and inevitable result will be an explosion. Hence the revolutionary movement, which will continue until the Shah's regime is destroyed." Now, of course, the "revolutionary movement" has turned against Khomeini's regime. □



■ APPEAL FROM EXILE

Khomeini's Reign Of Terror

MANSOUR FARHANG

Human liberation in one part of the world is ultimately inseparable from liberation in other parts. Thus, all people who support the cause of freedom are morally obliged to speak out in defense of the rights and the humanity of the Iranian people, whose peaceful and popular revolution has been transformed into religious fascism.

On behalf of President Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, I wish to appeal to the conscience of the world, to all men and women supporting the cause of human freedom, to break their silence and condemn the crimes of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime.

No government in recent decades has established such totalitarian and barbaric political order as the present government of Iran. During a four-month period last year, more than 3,000 innocent people were executed without public hearings. The regime intrudes upon the most intimate aspects of daily life. Homes are entered and their occupants seized not only for political reasons but also on the mere suspicion that they have violated the dictates of the state in the conduct of their private affairs. There are currently about 50,000 political prisoners in Iranian jails, where torture is routinely practiced. It has also been estimated that another 50,000 dissidents have been driven underground. Hundreds of people have been killed or imprisoned for giving shelter to critics of the regime. It is a tragedy that these hideous crimes are being committed

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in the name of Islam and the Shiite tradition.

The condemnation of these continuing crimes in Iran by all concerned people will expose the true face of Khomeini's regime and provide hope and inspiration to the Iranian people, who are living under an unimaginable reign of terror. Before the revolutionary victory of February 1979, Iranians suffered under the political and economic oppression of the Shah. In the present struggle, we are opposing not only political and economic oppression but also cultural and religious totalitarianism.

It is important to note that the political struggle in Iran today is not between the clerical and the nonclerical forces. Only a tiny minority of the mullahs have arrogated to themselves the divine right to govern Iran. A theologian as prominent as Sheik Ali Tehrani is in prison. Young clerics like Ahmad Mohaddess, Amir Sharif-Razi, Yunes Baraai and Mohsen Aleesehaq—all with records of devotion in religion and resistance—were recently executed. Habib Ashouri, another distinguished theologian and scholar, was executed for criticizing the regime. Many high-ranking ayatollahs in Qum, Teheran, Isfahan and Mashhad are under virtual house arrest. Ayatollah Lahouti, who spent twelve years in the Shah's prisons and was an outspoken opponent of the present regime, died mysteriously. Ayatollah Golzadeh Ghafouri, a popular theologian and political figure, was forced into seclusion after the execution of his son last year. Thus it is sheer deception for Khomeini to present himself as the only legitimate spokesman for the Iranian Shiite hierarchy. In fact, according to the teaching of Shia Islam, acceptance of religious authority is voluntary. Khomeini violates this tradition when, in the name of Islam,

he justifies execution or imprisonment as an appropriate punishment for refusal to follow his orders.

Political opposition of any type is not tolerated in Iran today. Those who dare to speak out against the government are quickly—and often brutally—silenced. Dr. Shaffaii, a well-known physician, and his wife were executed for supporting the People's Mujahedeen in Isfahan. Abolfazl Ghassemi, a 67-year-old National Front leader who was elected to Parliament from his native city of Dareh-Gaz, was sentenced to life imprisonment for criticizing the regime, and just last week, another prominent National Front leader, Shokrollah Pakneczad, was executed. Incidents such as the killing of Mujahedeen members Rahman Rahnema and Jamshid Jalilpour in Tabriz prison are so commonplace that they are not even announced to the public.

The Iranian regime has a special hatred for artists, writers and intellectuals. Hussain Navab, a young and talented journalist, was executed simply because he was a popular editorial writer for *Engelab-e Islami*, the newspaper of Bani-Sadr's supporters and the largest-circulation daily until the government shut it down last June. Rashid Sadrolhefazi, an engineer and political activist, and Manouchehr Massoudi, a prominent lawyer who spent time in the Shah's prison and defended many political prisoners of the Shah's regime, were executed because they had worked in Bani-Sadr's offices. Saiid Soltanpour and Abdol-Reza Ghafouri, progressive writers affiliated with the Fedayeen Khalq, the Marxist guerrilla organization, were executed without public trial.

The Iranian regime pretends not to care what others think of its repressive actions. For example, Amnesty Interna-



tional's request to investigate charges of political executions was rejected by Khomeini as part of a conspiracy against the Islamic Republic. Needless to say, this seeming disregard for world opinion should not be taken seriously. No repressive government has ever admitted that it was influenced by international expressions of concern about its policies. The

present Iranian regime is no exception. Silence is not a defensible option. Those who support the cause of freedom and justice out of moral or humanistic conviction have no choice but to speak with greater urgency in the face of this repressive regime's total disregard of human values and the right of people to defend them. □

Organizing Statement of the Emergency Committee for the Defense of Democracy and Human Rights in Iran

We who sign this statement welcomed the Iranian revolution and considered its triumph a great victory of the Iranian people against a cruel monarchy and foreign domination.

We were appalled by the coup against the constitutional order of Iran engineered by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1953, which began twenty-seven years of tyranny. We opposed the role of the C.I.A. in establishing the Savak and in guiding the policy of suppression of democratic rights and the exploitation of the population. We also opposed the weight of the American presence in Iran during the Shah's years, especially the sale of advanced arms designed to dominate the region for American financial and geopolitical interests.

Above all, we worked to expose the sustained violations of human rights by the Shah's regime, the systematic torture and the wholesale suppression of political dissent.

The Iranian revolution unfolded amidst universal demands in Iran for an end to censorship, for the release from prison of all dissidents irrespective of their political persuasion and for the realization of full democratic rights of political groups to organize, meet, publish and to present their views and programs to the nation.

Whatever our own political persuasions, we were united in the belief that a free polity in which all might exercise their rights was inseparable from the quest for a just order expressed by all participants in the Iranian revolution itself. This fundamental promise of the revolution has not been kept.

The government which has emerged in Iran has established a one-party state and resistance to its role has been met with repression. Nationalists, socialists, national minorities and dissenting individuals have been prevented from exercising their democratic rights. Political parties have been outlawed, newspapers closed, meetings forbidden and a monopoly of both the political process and the means of communication allocated to one faction of the religious movement.

Religion has served not merely as a source of ideas or guiding principles for those who subscribe to them, but rather as a rigid prescriptive imposed on all and made an inseparable part of the State. This theocratic development never was part of the Iranian revolution, nor of the Islamic faith itself.

Arbitrary executions have been widespread and

thousands have been arrested without charges, right of defense or the protection of a judicial process. Indeed, prominent among the victims of this repression have been numerous individuals who played courageous roles in the struggle against the Shah, including many who spent years in the Shah's prisons. The national minorities, whose aspirations for autonomy and the expression of their culture placed them in the front ranks of the long struggle against the Pahlevi tyranny, have found their just demands treated as ruthlessly by the present government.

As in the past, we oppose injustice in Iran. We defended the Iranian revolution then and we defend it today. It is precisely because of these convictions that we join together again to call for the renewal of the promise of the Iranian revolution: for the right of all those who fought against the Shah to exercise their democratic rights in Iran, for an end to autocratic rule, imprisonment of opponents, arbitrary execution and the use of terror against those who appeal to the Iranian people for a different course of action than that decreed by the new rulers of Iran.

We support no particular political tendency in Iran, save that of the sacred rights of the Iranian people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural future free from outside interference of any kind. Pointing to the failures of the current Iranian leaders provides no pretext for outside intervention, especially by the two superpowers.

Our pledge is to speak out on behalf of Iranian national and human rights and to inform the American people as accurately as possible about unfolding developments in Iran.

—*Mary Anderson, American Friends Service Committee; Rev. William Sloan Coffin, Riverside Church, New York City; David Dellinger, author; Prof. William Dorman, California State University at Sacramento; Prof. Richard Falk, Princeton University; Jack Levine, lawyer; Don Luce, Southeast Asia Resource Center; Prof. Everest Mendelson, Harvard University; Prof. Saul Mendlovitz, Rutgers University; Prof. Tom Ricks, Georgetown University; Prof. Edward Said, Columbia University; Ralph Schoenman, author; George Wald and Ruth Wald, scientists; Prof. Burns Weston, Iowa University; C. Dale White, Methodist Bishop.*

■ THATCHERIZING AMERICA

Social Security Goes Private

WILLIAM K. TABB

By now it should be clear that all the Reagan Administration's talk last year about the impending bankruptcy of the Social Security system was part of a strategy not of preserving but of drastically cutting back and eventually doing away entirely with Federal responsibility for supporting retired Americans. Such a radical step is, of course, politically unfeasible at this time. Preliminary attempts to chip away at the system, such as proposals to cut the benefits of those retiring at age 62 by one third, to raise the retirement age from 65 to 68 and to abolish minimum payments, were abandoned in the face of determined opposition in Congress. But that does not mean that President Reagan has given up.

Indeed, doing away with Social Security is only one aspect of Reagan's grand plan to abolish the welfare state by a "re-privatization" of the American economy. This backdoor route calls for using Federal tax subsidies to underwrite private programs while government social spending is reduced. Reprivatization is behind the passage of the higher child-care tax credit for working parents [see Jill Norgren and Sheila Cole, "Heaven Help the Working Mother," *The Nation*, January 23] and the changes in the tax law encouraging businesses to offer child care as a fringe benefit at the same time as appropriations for day-care centers are reduced. It is behind the cutbacks in funds to build Federal housing and the simultaneous proposal of housing vouchers, which may be used to pay for private rentals. But the drive to reprivatize retirement benefits is the most far-reaching effort yet.

The President said last September, "There is . . . a sizable percentage of recipients who are adequately provided for by pensions or other income and should not be adding to the financial burden of Social Security." By fostering the myth that a large number of old people with fat private pensions are draining the coffers of Social Security, the President showed that he really favors making the middle class rely more on private plans and limiting Federal benefits to the "truly needy." Such a move would have an important political consequence. It would shrink the highly vocal constituency of Social Security recipients.

Reagan's big problem is that the middle class supports Federal funding of retirement rather than exclusive reliance on private pensions. The Reagan strategy is to make private saving more attractive. One vehicle is the All Savers Cer-

William K. Tabb's book The Long Default: New York and the Urban Fiscal Crisis was recently published by Monthly Review Press.

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tificate. With their tax-free interest, the certificates provide a Federal tax subsidy to savers, giving them a rare opportunity to participate in the great U.S. Treasury raid, a privilege normally reserved for big business and the tax sheltered. When All Savers were introduced last October, the government estimated that sales of the certificates would total between \$65 billion and \$70 billion, reducing tax revenues by \$3 billion. But estimates of total sales were later revised upward to \$200 billion, which means \$10 billion in lost taxes.

The tax subsidy to encourage private saving serves two purposes in the Administration's grand fiscal design. First, it encourages those who have the cash to build a nest egg for retirement, gradually weakening their allegiance to Social Security. Second, it increases the pool of investment capital. The goal is to channel money that people would otherwise spend into savings, which are then available to business. Cutting Social Security benefits also serves this purpose by reducing Federal spending while increasing Federal tax expenditures—i.e., reducing taxes—and transferring funds from the private to the public sector. As *Business Week* observed editorially in its June 1, 1981, issue: "For the U.S. economy to grow, government spending must be cut enough to produce an early surplus in the federal budget. Budgetary surpluses are savings and are needed to free resources for use by the private sector."

In addition to creating the All Savers Certificates, Congress revised the Internal Revenue code to permit increased deductions for money invested in Individual Retirement Accounts and to allow people covered by private pension plans to set up I.R.A.s. These measures will further the Administration's goal of encouraging voluntary pension plans. This is not to say that people should not take advantage of the new law. They should. The tax savings can be substantial. Yet if concomitant reductions in Social Security benefits—in the name of economy and saving the system from insolvency—are pushed through, perhaps in 1983, the Social Security constituency will be diminished, as those who can afford to increasingly rely on private savings.

Certainly to Administration hard-liners, Social Security is no longer untouchable. Consider the views of Norman Ture, a high-ranking supply-side theorist in the Treasury Department who was quoted on November 8 in *The Washington Post*: "For most of our history we didn't have Social Security. People did not simply reach the age of 65 and die. They had provision made, by themselves, by their family, by charity." This is rot, of course. In the "good old days" that Ronald Reagan is dedicated to recapturing, large numbers of the elderly died of hunger and disease. They froze in the winter and suffered indignities at the hands of charitable agencies in return for an irregular pittance. Social Security gave old people a semblance of dignity; it was theirs as a right, an insurance plan paid for by the contributions of a lifetime's work. Small wonder that it remains the most popular program introduced by the New Deal.

Today, inadequate as they are, Social Security payments provide an indispensable financial cushion for the elderly. The vast majority of Americans still count on them to pro-

vide for their basic needs when they become too old to work. In 1980, only 14 percent of total retirement income came from private pension plans; state and local government plans accounted for another 8 percent. In 1978, only 28 percent of all retired people received any income from private pensions. In contrast, three-fifths of the elderly received at least half their income from Social Security, and for a quarter of them, Social Security furnished 90 percent. The average retiree today collects \$375 a month in Social Security benefits, and 8 percent receive only the \$122 monthly minimum. (And, at Reagan's behest, Congress changed the law to abolish the monthly minimum for "new" retirees.) Nonetheless, most of the elderly would be destitute without this modest stipend.

Private pensions cannot replace Social Security. Only about half the work force is covered by such plans, and a large proportion of these workers will never collect their pensions because they will be laid off or change jobs before the ten-year vesting period is up. The President's Commission on Pension Policy reported that in 1978, the average annual pension payment to an individual was \$2,919; the average payment to a married couple was \$3,189. Private pensions alone cannot support a dignified old age, especially since these benefits are eroded by inflation as the years pass. Few private pensions are indexed to the cost of living, as are Social Security payments, which is why the latter have become so crucial to the survival of our older citizens.

Clearly, private pension plans are inadequate, and All Savers benefit only a minority. Social Security, however, helps millions of Americans, and Reagan's attempt to use fiscal policy to change the system must be recognized for what it is: part of a concerted design to Thatcherize America. □

The Promise

(Continued From Front Cover)

worse treatment at the hands of the trial judge, Federal District Court Judge Harold Greene, who had said he believed the government had proved that the company had violated antitrust laws. But there was a carrot whose lure was even more potent than the company's fear of the stick. A.T.&T. saw enormous profit potential in the field of telecommunications technologies, which the settlement freed it to enter. A.T.&T. is now contemplating new ventures that range from cable TV and video Yellow Pages to systems that allow different kinds of computers to communicate with one another.

A.T.&T.'s expansion beyond the telephone service on which it was built is the most visible manifestation of a larger revolution that is shaping the future of the communications industry. It is a revolution whose course is being overseen primarily by the F.C.C., whose chairman,

Mark Fowler, is one of the most ardent champions of industry in an Administration filled with regulators whose first allegiance is to the businesses they regulate.

The immediate effect of the A.T.&T. settlement was to focus attention on a telecommunications gold rush for the twenty-first century. Recent technological advances have left the F.C.C. lagging behind. Questions about how to regulate the exploding and increasingly overlapping telephone, television, computer and satellite industries have proliferated. For all the attention the F.C.C. receives, it could be the agency that sets turnip prices. In fact, it will be the scene of a host of momentous—and far-reaching—regulatory battles.

Some of these will be mopping-up operations related to the A.T.&T. settlement. Others will determine the structure of the cable-television industry and who will benefit from the nascent technologies of low-power television and direct satellite broadcasting, all of which might someday threaten the dominance of the three networks. What is at stake, according to Representative Timothy Wirth, Democrat of Colorado and chairman of the House telecommunications subcommittee, is nothing less than the "control of information in a democratic society."

In the telecommunications and broadcasting industries, policy makers face two fundamental questions having to do with control. Will the existing communications giants be allowed to control the new transmission technologies? And will those firms that transmit the information be allowed to control its content as well?

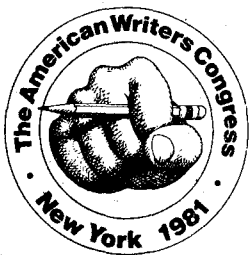
The Justice Department's settlement offers one set of answers to these questions as they pertain to A.T.&T. Since the company will no longer enjoy preferential access to local telephone lines—or the opportunity to subsidize unregulated activities through the steady income provided by that regulated monopoly—Assistant Attorney General William Baxter, head of the department's antitrust division, says that "the surviving A.T.&T. company . . . will be free to offer any services they choose to whatsoever," a view seconded by A.T.&T.'s top management. That includes transmitting information over cable or other systems, from which A.T.&T. had previously been barred.

But the settlement also raises a host of questions, and the answers will determine the extent to which the telecommunications industry will actually be opened up to competition. Rather than specifying a plan for divestiture of the local operating companies, the agreement gives A.T.&T. six months to draw it up. And in its language, which explicitly allows the local companies to "share the costs of a centralized organization for the provision of engineering, administrative and other services," the agreement appears to envision that all of the local companies will be joined into a single holding company.

Obviously, there will be fewer opportunities for outside suppliers if they are dealing with only one company rather than with several. If the new entity chooses to buy all, or even most, of its equipment from Western Electric, potential suppliers would be left with much the same market that they have now. Also left open are the questions of how

Ronald Brownstein is a staff writer for Ralph Nader and co-author, with Nina Easton, of an upcoming book profiling the top 100 members of the Reagan Administration.

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assets are to be divvied up and how the value of assets that are transferred to the parent company will be assessed. The disposition of these matters will determine the capital worth of the new A.T.&T.

The agreement was reached as A.T.&T. was beginning to implement the F.C.C.'s 1980 "Computer II" decision, which freed the world's largest company to launch new ventures in telecommunications technology and services. Under that decision, A.T.&T. was to develop and market data processing and computer services through a separate subsidiary, dubbed "Baby Bell." This arrangement supposedly would prevent Bell from subsidizing its competitive activities with telephone revenues.

The use of a separate subsidiary—rather than divestiture—to equalize competition was approved by the Senate last fall in a 90-to-4 vote on a bill deregulating the communications industry. But the legislation was expected to have a much tougher time in the House, where Wirth's subcommittee had released a study which concluded that competition in the industry was considerably less brisk than supporters of deregulation had claimed. Despite the inroads of competitors like MCI Communications Corporation, for example, Bell still controls more than 96 percent of the long-distance market. It was the publication of the subcommittee's findings, along with disquieting signals from Judge Greene and Baxter's statement that passage of the Senate bill did not justify dropping the antitrust case, that made A.T.&T. realize that a settlement might be its best hope.

Although the significance of the Computer II decision was diminished by the settlement, it remains in effect and is important to Bell's potential competitors. As John Chapman, counsel to the Computer & Communications Industry Association, put it: "Certainly there has to still be a means of preventing cross subsidization between long lines and Baby Bell because of the monopoly power that is still maintained by the Bell System [in long-distance service]. You still have the cross-subsidization problem but not on the same scale."

A.T.&T. says it will continue to hatch Baby Bell, though it "expects" the F.C.C. may want to review the entire plan. A.T.&T.'s competitors have long sought such a review, contending that the separate subsidiary was an illusory safeguard, and last fall the General Accounting Office released a detailed critique that supported this view. The G.A.O. found that the F.C.C.'s "separate subsidiary approach . . . does not go far enough . . . in providing for organizational restructuring and separation of the activities of the dominant carrier [A.T.&T.] . . . [and leaves] a significant potential for internal cross-subsidy and a host of other anticompetitive actions."

But the controversy over the subsidiary may ultimately have another resolution. Now that long-distance competitors have equal access to local telephone lines, A.T.&T. may one day ask to be freed from regulation. And if long-distance rates were deregulated, A.T.&T. could argue that the separate subsidiary was unnecessary, since the firm no longer provided profit-guaranteed services with which to subsidize its other activities. That argument could prove

politically powerful later in this decade, though A.T.&T.'s dominance of the long-distance market might continue, enabling it to replace public regulation of prices with monopoly power.

In its settlement with Bell, the Justice Department elbowed aside the F.C.C., which normally plays the leading role in setting telecommunications policy. But the F.C.C. will soon rule on a clutch of questions in the broadcasting field, whose antitrust implications are almost as far-reaching as those in the A.T.&T. case.

The commission's chairman is an unabashed industry advocate who offers homilies about the evils of government interference at the slightest provocation. Fowler's conception of his stewardship of the public airwaves is remarkably similar to Secretary of the Interior James Watt's views on managing the public lands. Fowler's idea of the regulator's role can be summarized in three words: let industry decide. As he told an appreciative audience at a meeting of the International Radio and Television Society last September: "The commission should, so far as possible, defer to a broadcaster's judgment about how best to compete for viewers and listeners because this serves the public interest."

But Representative Wirth disagrees: "Just as government cannot decide what information is 'good' . . . neither should a handful of private entities arrogate such decisions to themselves. Control of information is far more important than the question of monopoly of the spark plug industry."

Fowler's reply is that technology itself has solved the monopoly question. "In addition to new UHF stations," he has said, "broadband technologies like cable and other video services have dramatically undermined the case for regulating in the name of scarcity."

But Fowler's critics point out that these technologies remain only a promise and that most communities are still limited to the fare available from the conventional television and radio outlets. The largest cable company, for example, has 1.4 million subscribers; nationwide, only 17.4 million homes are wired. "The reason for regulation is still the scarcity of the spectrum and the fact that not everyone can participate," says former F.C.C. chairman Charles Ferris. "The overall environment is not [sufficiently] competitive to justify the removal of all regulation."

Nevertheless, Fowler is busily translating his anti-regulatory sentiments into specific policies. For example, he opposes the current rules that bar the networks and local broadcasters from owning cable stations or systems, and says the "7-7-7" rule prohibiting any firm from owning more than seven AM, seven FM and seven television stations "makes little sense."

The dangers in Fowler's approach are considerable. Allowing the networks to enter the cable market, says Andrew Jay Schwartzman, executive director of the Media Access Project, could destroy competition. Last summer, the F.C.C. granted CBS a waiver that allows the network to own and operate cable systems serving fewer than 90,000 subscribers—the first waiver granted since the networks were barred from the cable market eleven years ago. "On

do not take someone who has a vast amount of monopoly power as a result of regulatory protection [like the networks] and then announce there is a free market in which they should compete," says Schwartzman. "They'll just eat up

WRITERS CONGRESS RECORD

Scholars in the Boardroom

"It is widely believed that American academics devote almost all of their occupational efforts to scholarly pursuits and avoid involvement in outside activities that might impair their judgment or subject them to questionable influences. But in the last five or ten years there has been a disturbing shift in the research and affiliations of certain prominent academics. In sharp contrast to past days when the vast majority of scholars steered clear of economically 'entangling alliances,' a number of influential academics have entered into formal associations with major corporations by accepting seats on their boards of directors. This, of course, is their right in a free society, and they no doubt bring considerable expertise to board meetings. But the general public is apparently unaware of this growing and probably pernicious trend. Since many of these figures write books, articles or 'Op-Ed' page opinions in widely read newspapers (in one case a syndicated column), Americans should be alerted to their corporate ties. A look at business directories like Standard & Poor's register and the various Moody's manuals reveals that there are at least thirty scholars in the field of the social sciences, the most politically sensitive area, who now grace the board of one or more large corporations. Herewith a 'Who's Who' of several prominent academics, listing their corporate and political ties:

Murray Weidenbaum. *Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers; former director of the Center for Study of American Business, Washington University, St. Louis; former adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; former board member, May Department Stores; author of The Future of Business Regulations, a recent study attacking the high cost of government regulations.*

Herbert Stein. *Former chairman, Council of Economic Advisers; professor of economics, University of Virginia; senior fellow, American Enterprise Institute; board of directors, Reynolds Metals Company; writes weekly column for Scripps-Howard newspapers.*

Paul MacAvoy. *Professor of economics, Yale University; former member, Council of Economic Advisers; board of directors, Amax; former board member, American Cyanamid; writes frequently for business section of The New York Times.*

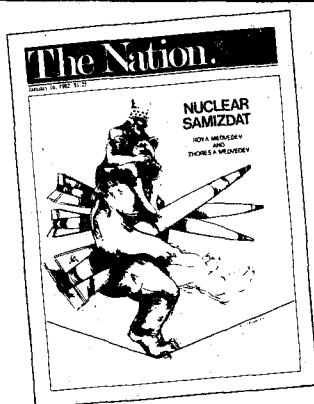
Aaron Wildavsky. *Professor of political science, University of California, Berkeley; author of How to Limit Government Spending; board of directors, Management Assistance Inc. and DWG Corporation; review of Politics and Markets by Charles Lindblom in Yale Law Journal.*

Robert Stobaugh. *Professor of business administration, Harvard Business School; co-author, Energy Future; board of directors, Ashland Oil.*

Edward Teller. *Nuclear physicist; senior fellow, Hoover Institute; board of directors, Thermo-Electron Corporation (sales to nuclear power industry); frequent speeches in behalf of nuclear power plants."*

—Philip H. Burch, educational researcher,
American Writers Congress, October 9-12, 1981.

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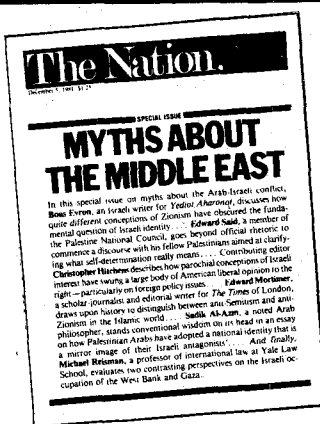
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the little fish. . . . They are equipped by virtue of their broadcasting money machine to overwhelm those who are already in cable, and to deter potential entrants."

In the next few months, the F.C.C. will make the decisions that will determine the future of direct broadcasting satellites (D.B.S.), which can beam programs directly into the home, thus bypassing the networks, and low-power television, which provides low-watt local service within a ten-mile radius. These decisions will test Fowler's repeatedly stated commitment to deregulation, since the new technologies would greatly expand public access to the airwaves and challenge the virtual monopoly the broadcasters now enjoy.

Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige has urged the F.C.C. to promote the development of satellite technology, which could present the networks with their first national competitors, and, to the consternation of the broadcasters, Fowler appears inclined to agree. Fourteen firms, including CBS, RCA (the corporate parent of NBC), Western Union and Comsat have filed interim applications to begin work on D.B.S. service. John Wicklein, former dean of the Boston University School of Public Communications, and other advocates of broader access to the media, argue that the satellite operators should be viewed as "common carriers," like the telephone system, and barred from providing programming. "The temptation of the carrier to bar other [information] providers or favor its inhouse producers of content would be just too great," Wicklein testified before Congress. "D.B.S. satellites, if operated as common carriers, could add to the diversity of voices that could be heard regionally and nationally." It is not surprising that several of the D.B.S. applicants, including the networks, seek to generate as well as transmit programming.

Low-power television, which could compete with the networks in reaching viewers with specialized interests or in local markets, is also in limbo. When the F.C.C. was swamped during the past two years by applications for licenses from groups ranging from community organizations and unions to the Sears Corporation, Congress authorized it to choose among the competitors by lottery. Congress also directed the commission to weight the lottery so that it would favor groups that have historically been underrepresented in media ownership. Now, however, some members of Congress fear that the F.C.C. will simply throw up its hands and put off indefinitely granting any licenses. That would certainly please broadcasters who are worried about competition from direct satellite operators, but it would leave the large issues unresolved.

In a single stroke, the A.T.&T. agreement overturned the elaborate regulatory and legislative structure laboriously built by Congress, the F.C.C. and legions of industry lobbyists over the past few years. As a new structure is erected, a few things are certain: A.T.&T. will make its desires known, and the equipment manufacturers and computer companies will be well represented in any debate. Whether the users of all this technology will be considered in the debate remains a moot question, one that Congress needs to address before it blesses an agreement that positions A.T.&T. as the gatekeeper of the information age. □

BOOKS & THE ARTS.

I, Me, Mine

GEORGE STADE

THE DEAN'S DECEMBER. By Saul Bellow. Harper & Row. 312 pp. \$13.95.

Albert Corde, dean of students at an unnamed Chicago college, is in Bucharest. There's been an earthquake: heaps of rubble exhale decay, and underneath lie unrecoverable bodies. On the streets are two-dimensional rats, squashed flat by cars. The 40-watt bulb is the norm. Radiators turn cold after breakfast. Faucets go dry at 8 A.M. There is no meat in the stores and little of anything else. The women queue up for what there is at daybreak.

And the apartment in which Corde sleeps or sits bundled against the cold is bugged; spies, informers and secret police lurk everywhere, among them the concierge and an old family retainer. The harassments of high-handed bureaucrats rub it in that nobody has private rights, but a little baksheesh in the form of king-sized Kents can get functionary vigilance to wink. The American dean, thinking over "the peculiar psychoses of penitentiary societies like this one," notes that "we may be looking at our own future."

It's the weak democracies that produce dictatorships; American decadence is heading full speed toward collapse. So goes a piece of Russian propaganda the dean has come across, and he sees something in it. His evidence is a number of recent experiences that we learn about piecemeal, through conversations and flashbacks that alternate with the events in Rumania. The dean has gotten himself entangled in a court case, on the prosecutor's side. A white student has been murdered by a pair of black hustlers. There's nothing you could call a motive. The murder just occurs at a random confluence of drugs, sexual mania, interracial exploitation, inner-city confusion and despair.

Corde's series of "abyssifying and catastrophizing" articles on Chicago have also gotten him into hot water: "It

was open season on Corde." He investigated the jails, the courts, the neighborhoods, the slums, the swingers, the officials, the diagnosticians and custodians, the brutes in charge and their brutalized victims. He found murder, mayhem, madness, an excess of explanation, systematic falsification, "anguish beyond the bounds of human tolerance," a whole population marked for early death. He found a "slum of innermost being, of which the inner city is perhaps a material representation"; he found that "this is Lenin's age of wars and revolutions," the "Third World erupting all over." Nobody liked these articles. But the dean wrote them, he says, "to recover the world that is buried under the debris of false description or nonexperience," which is a pretty good reason, whatever the result.

So there we have two sides of the debate: Communist impoverishment and constriction as against American disorder and opulence (near the end of the novel, the dean goes to a genteel orgy of conspicuous consumption, a birthday party for a dog—"champagne, sturgeon, lobster, Russian eggs for starters, and lunch to follow"). But the structure of ideas in this novel is foursquare; we have two sides to go. One of them is argued (mutely) by the dean's mother-in-law, Valeria, who is half-paralyzed, blind, dying in the party hospital she founded.

Valorous Valeria had become a Communist out of love for her husband, a militant; had gone into the streets with roses to greet the Russian troops; had risen through the party ranks to become Minister of Health. She then fell into disgrace, suffered a trial and threats of death; when offered rehabilitation, she refused to rejoin the party. "Then for thirty years she had made up for the Marxism, for the sin of helping to bring in the new regime, by a private system of atonement, setting up her mutual-aid female network." Valeria is a matriarch, a heroine; she is archaic and classical, and her personal humanity is that of "the old European life which at its most disgraceful was infinitely better than this present one." The dean has come to Bucharest specifically to watch over "Valeria's last days. Great Valeria's

end." She dies, wouldn't you know, on Christmas Eve, taking with her the guilty and chastened old European Christian humanist culture. Minna, Valeria's daughter and the dean's wife, has to spell it out—"My mother is a symbol"—for Bellow has lost his faith in the reader's ability to catch his drift. (There is more than a little of Mr. Sammler in Valeria.)

It is the dean's "unworldly" wife, a professor of astronomy, who provides the fourth position in the debate. Her perspective is cosmic. "She did boundless space, his beat was terra firma." Her work, as the dean sees it, is to bring together "a needle from one end of the universe with a thread from the opposite end." In the last pages he ascends with her through the vast Mount Palomar dome toward the "living heavens," which he takes in, penetrates, feels down to the very blood and to the crystal forms inside his bones. An old English gentleman, a lifelong atheist, when asked whether he believed in God, replied that "there's nothing too rum to be true." Corde thinks of this remark often. "He depended on that now." There is no Ouspensky in this novel, thank God, just a little Swedenborgian talk about "the reunion of spirit and nature." Bellow's metaphysical hankerings, here as elsewhere, leave me cold as interstellar space.

The cosmic perspective gets the last word, all right, but the least emphasis; in this book it is a sigh, a flourish in the optative mood, a gesture toward a strong ending. The old European culture is dead; Bellow doesn't waste time trying to resurrect it. Communist constriction at least squeezes a kind of moral sturdiness out of some of its victims. American disorder cannot even say that much for itself. Just the same, of the four positions, it's the one that wins out—imaginatively if not logically. It's what stirs Bellow's imagination, indignation and, finally, love. But he has done better by it elsewhere.

For one thing, the characterization here is sketchy. Minna is too good to be true. There is the usual cast of familial betrayers, crack-brained reality instructors, erotomaniacs, aggressive achievers, Chicago tough guys ("native sons, men of power, devoid of culture, lovers of money, fearlessly insolent") who envy and condescend to the dean; but in this novel we get only their outlines, as

George Stade teaches English at Columbia University. His novel, Confessions of a Lady-Killer, was recently issued in paperback by Alpha-Omega Books.

though Bellow expected us to fill in the details from his other books. Even Corde (he strikes a chord, he's all heart: "Everything moved him"), even the dean, although he is recognizably Saul Bellow in his appearance, his preoccupations, his recent experience, is only presented to us in silhouette. We have to flesh him out with what we know about Bellow and with our memories of Herzog and Charley Citrine, of Henderson and Augie March. I do not find Bellow's fictional image of himself as endlessly fascinating as Bellow does.

And the novel would have been stronger, I think, if its ideas had been filtered through a character more capable of changing himself or of surprising us than the familiar Albert Corde, "an earnest, brooding, heart-struck, time-ravaged person (or boob), with his moral desires and taking up the burdens of mankind." Or maybe what I truly miss in this cast of characters is the beautiful bitch, the man-eating ex-wife, who is conspicuously absent here and who always brought out the interesting best and worst in Bellow's other male leads. I take it that for the moment Bellow is happily married.

But Bellow needed someone like Corde, for he had more in mind than to survey our condition or to unearth the reality buried under "the debris of false description," where it rots and smells like the unrecovered bodies of earthquake victims. Bellow wanted both to justify himself and to settle a few scores, mainly with professors, literary journalists and intellectuals, "the world's permanent and growing population of educated lunatics." (Their stand-in is the treacherous Dewey Spangler, who wants to fill the shoes of Walter Lippmann, "a hell of a nasty ambition to suffer from.") Albert Corde is to his articles as Saul Bellow is to his recent novels, particularly *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, which few literary intellectuals praised: "Liberals found him reactionary. Conservatives called him crazy." The matter ("the big-scale insanities of the twentieth century") and much of the manner of Corde's articles and Bellow's novels are the same, and Corde's defense is Bellow's: "the first act of morality was to disinter the reality, retrieve reality, dig it out of the trash, represent it anew as art would represent it." Bellow's defense is the novelist's best and only one: *I have shown you how it is with us.*

And so he has, more or less, less

maybe in this novel than in some of its predecessors. Few of our novelists are as smart as Bellow or as significant in their crotchets. A sign of his value to us is that no already formulated political/cultural position can describe precisely

where he stands. And few of our serious novelists are as much fun to read as Bellow, even when he gets you mad. My main complaint about this novel is that wherever Bellow stands, it's too close to himself. □

Life Texts

ERIC HOMBERGER

ALL THAT IS SOLID MELTS INTO AIR: The Experience of Modernity. By Marshall Berman. Simon and Schuster. 384 pp. \$17.50.

Marshall Berman describes *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* as "a study in the dialectics of modernization and modernism." His title and central metaphor is drawn from a dazzling analysis of the *Communist Manifesto*. Marx's work has, of course, been "read" as literature before, but for that purpose his vivid and accessible exercise in narrative, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, has generally been preferred. Unlike Jeffrey Mehlman, whose *Revolution and Repetition: Marx/Hugo/Balzac* (1977) charmed Marx's many enemies with its elegant and obtuse hostility, Berman has been moved by Marx, and he responds fully to Marx's humanistic dream of self-fulfillment: "the real force and originality of Marx's 'historical materialism,' " Berman writes, "is the light it sheds on modern spiritual life." He contrasts a "solid" vision of modernity in the *Manifesto* (which describes the concentration of capital, the expansion of trade and the creation of a world market) with a "melting" vision:

All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face . . . the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men.

Berman abandons the scientific dimensions of Marxism. In their place we find a Marx who is unique in his appreciation of the heroic energies and the "in-

Eric Homberger, who was editor of the Cambridge Review, teaches at the University of East Anglia, England.

nate dynamism" of the bourgeoisie. Berman clearly regards himself as someone who writes within the orbit of Marx, but he is strikingly independent too; a hostile reader might describe his Marxism as idiosyncratic in the extreme.

In addition to the extended discussion of Marx, Berman writes of Goethe's *Faust*, describing it as a "tragedy of development," of Baudelaire's and Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris, and of the "Petersburg tradition" of forcible modernization from above. He also discusses Pushkin, Gogol, Chernyshevsky, Dostoyevsky, Biely and Mandelstam. The book concludes with a chapter on Robert Moses, the Bronx and the fate of New York City in "an age of diminishing expectations." The boldness of Berman's project is matched by the fluidity and alertness of his responses to his texts.

Berman sees Faust as having inaugurated the project of modernization, and he also sees that Faust was unable to complete the process of self-development without radically transforming "the whole physical and social and moral world he lives in." The Faustian model of development is not, despite Georg Lukacs's view, solely capitalist; while it is perfectly exemplified by the projects of a Robert Moses, it is also exemplified by such things as the Soviet Union's Five Year Plans.

In the chapter on Baudelaire, the poet becomes the first of Berman's heroic wrestlers with inner contradiction. For Berman, Baudelaire elaborates an early "pastoral" vision of the natural affinity between material and spiritual modernization. Later in Baudelaire's career, Berman uncovers a "counter-pastoral" image which is profoundly hostile to progress because it threatens to confuse the claims of the material and the spiritual. But it was Baudelaire's attempt "to find and create himself" that made him such an exemplary modern. Berman centers his analysis on two prose poems from *Paris Spleen*, and

while the insights he draws from these pieces are both stimulating and scrupulous, they seem in the end too slight to sustain such a wide-ranging argument.

In his discussion of the Petersburg tradition, Berman's analysis of literary texts is carefully interwoven with an account of the creation of the city by Peter the Great in 1703, and of the gradual emergence of a counterpressure from below that grew in response to the forcible pressures of modernization from above. Then, while the state "slept" during the reign of Nicholas I, Berman shows how the drama of modernization shifted from the Czar's palace to the capacious sidewalks of the Nevsky Prospekt. It was there that the "little men" of Petersburg learned to assert their existence and demand their rights. The struggle took the form of personal confrontations between lower and upper orders on the Nevsky Prospekt. This Petersburg tradition of "passionately intense encounters" culminated in the formation of the Soviet in 1905. But even Trotsky, a leading figure in the Soviet, might have been uneasy at Berman's gushing description of it as "perhaps the most radically participatory form of democracy since ancient Greece."

Chernyshevsky once remarked that "revolutionary struggle is not the pavement of Nevsky Prospekt." Krupskaya recalled that Lenin, who admired Chernyshevsky and kept his collected works next to those of Marx, Engels and Plekhanov in his office in the Kremlin, often quoted this remark, and with good reason. The Petersburg tradition might equally well have been portrayed as a tradition of secrecy and deception, where the circulation of forbidden literature, the establishment of secret printing presses and disguised study circles were obsessive concerns. It was also a tradition of police spies, betrayal, brutal repression and faltering attempts on the part of educated radicals to meet the workers of their city. (Conrad brilliantly portrays this sort of world in the first part of *Under Western Eyes*.) The street life of the Nevsky Prospekt made certain kinds of contacts between classes possible, but it was for most of the century foreign territory to the city's workers. The Nevsky was the place where the petite bourgeoisie, the clerks and civil servants, had their opportunity for face-to-face contact with the aristocracy and the governing elite, but

exactly how this opportunity differed from encounters in other capital cities in Europe is not at all clear.

By rights, modernism ought to have been far more pronounced in London than in Petersburg. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the urban population of England exceeded the rural population. (In *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams points out that this was the first time in human history that this had been so.) In 1851 fewer than 7.8 percent of the Russian people were town dwellers. Berman suggests that the particularly "fantastic" character of Russian modernism was related to the

backwardness of its social modernization, but this approximate version of Trotsky's thesis on "combined development" (by which the backwardness of Russia made possible a socialist transformation at an accelerated and unprecedented pace) is problematic: there are other modernisms and other backwardnesses that should have been introduced in comparison. Contemporary writing in South America would have provided one set of terms. Nineteenth-century London is an even more important case. It would have been interesting if Berman had discussed the distinct *failure* of London writers to

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produce that classic modernist literature which, in theory, ought to have accompanied the staggering growth of the city, the modernization of the British economy and the transformation of its social structure.

Modernism in English literature is a supreme instance of outside agitation: Joyce, Yeats, Pound, Eliot—all foreigners, all guilty, in Philip Larkin's view, of "irresponsible exploitation of technique in contradiction of human life as we know it." The connection—more properly, *connections*—between modernism in literature and economic and social modernization remain stubbornly elusive. But Berman has shown some of the connections, and has done that very well.

His discussion of New York City, complete with a roll call of Bronx *prominenten*, is an intramural matter. It is hard to see, from a distance, the full demonic aura of Robert Moses. Since every major European city, with the exception of Prague, Paris and Rome, has been extensively renovated in this century, the sad destruction of the Bronx is a dismaying but minor note in a wider devastation. The peculiar homeless state that Berman accurately and movingly describes as his own experience is characteristic of the alienation and dislocation of urban life everywhere. Nevertheless, he is right to place the Bronx, and its burnt-out buildings, within the context of the "melting" vision of capitalism. As one lovely building after another was knocked down to make way for the Cross Bronx Expressway, Berman experienced a grief which, in retrospect, he sees to be endemic to modernity: "So often the price of ongoing and expanding modernity is the destruction not merely of 'traditional' and 'pre-modern' institutions and environments but—and here is the real tragedy—of everything most vital and beautiful in the modern world itself."

Precisely when Berman seems to have succumbed to nostalgia or self-pity, he writes with a frankness and an honesty that I find deeply moving:

How many of us would still be in the Bronx today, caring for it and fighting for it as our own? Some of us, no doubt, but I suspect not so many, and in any case—it hurts to say it—not me. For the Bronx of my youth was possessed, inspired, by the great modern dream of mobility. To live well meant socially to move up, and

this in turn meant physically to move out; to live one's life close to home was not to be alive at all. Our parents, who had moved up and out from the Lower East Side, believed this just as devoutly as we did—even though their hearts might break when we went. Not even the radicals of my youth disputed this dream—and the Bronx of my childhood was full of radicals—their only complaint was that the dream wasn't being fulfilled, that people weren't able to move fast or freely or

equally enough. But when you see life this way, no neighborhood or environment can be anything more than a stage along life's way, a launching pad for higher flights and wider orbits than your own.

Or, as an unnamed "futurologist and creator of scenarios for nuclear war" once remarked to Berman, the real morality of the Bronx, its moral imperative, was: "Get out, schmuck, get out!" □

Discourse of Desire

WALTER KENDRICK

THE AGE OF DESIRE: Reflections of a Radical Psychoanalyst. By Joel Kovel. Pantheon Books. 288 pp. \$16.50.

Joel Kovel is a professional misfit. He calls himself a "Marxist psychoanalyst," and in a sense *The Age of Desire* is a book-length attempt to define that unlikely hybrid. It never quite succeeds: the mythic introspection of Freud and the historicized brass-tackiness of Marx still refuse to coalesce. We need them both, and they need each other; each claims to account for all we feel and do, yet we, living at the juncture of consciousness and history, find our dreams too meaningful for Marx and our social conditioning too determinative for Freud. Kovel, placing himself just where we live, fails at the grand synthesis but illustrates in the process how richly provocative the malaise of a misfit can be.

In form, *The Age of Desire* resembles the standard shrink-book. First, a thesis is propounded—usually that some minor doctrine of the Master's, tinkered with for three generations, needs more tinkering. Case histories follow: grim tales of misery condensed from the records of psychoanalytic sessions that often number in the thousands. Too dull and lamely told not to be true, these stories prove the thesis, and the conclusion is that all shrinks will henceforth have to tinker this way and no other.

But *The Age of Desire* is different. It begins with two epigraphs from Blake, a Kwakiutl Indian parable cited by Lévi-Strauss and a satiric "fantasy" on a national psychoanalytic convention. Like

Quesalid, the shaman who disbelieved the shamans, Kovel wanders from the Grand Imperial Ballroom to the Mirabeau Room, hearing lectures by nabobs A, B and C, seeking the source of an unease growing into anger. Dualisms plague him: mind/body, subject/object, society/nature. He leaves the hotel and heads into a park, where he sees real people in moments of real life, moments that plush-padded symposiums cannot touch. A boy and a girl pass by, laughing; Kovel, watching them, experiences an instant of "totalization"—"an event in space-time out of which subject-object forms had differentiated themselves." And from this event, analytically recollected, comes his thesis.

As a rule, shrinks eschew epiphanies. Glorifying in this one, Kovel distinguishes himself from his colleagues by his idealistic tone, his refreshing skepticism about the psychiatric establishment and his eagerness not merely to tinker with the Master's theories but to reconstitute the whole practice of psychoanalysis. Briefly stated, Kovel's thesis is that the "mind" is produced by psychoanalytic discourse, not discovered by it. The mind belongs to what Georg Lukacs called "second nature"—an entity isolated by bourgeois class activity and granted a kind of independence that obscures its participation in history. To maintain this isolation has become the principal labor of establishment psychiatry, and a highly rewarded labor it is. But the cost is even higher: the loss of the subversiveness that existed in Freud and his first followers.

With the opening of the Freud archive, much attention has lately been focused on the fateful early turn in the Master's thought, whereby he relinquished his belief in the childhood seductions described by his patients to

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rely instead on archetypal structures that he thought were independent of reality. Freud has often been criticized, especially in his case history of Dora, for zeroing in on the young girl's unexpressed (and perhaps unfelt) desires, instead of treating her neurosis as an intelligible response to her family's bizarre living arrangements. Kovel's own case histories follow the road not taken by Freud; he describes his patients not as protagonists in eternal dramas but as people who belong to social classes, hold jobs and are driven as much by late capitalism as by Eros and Thanatos.

Kovel is a stylish writer—a rare gift among shrinks—and his case histories read like tales of real life. Curtis the investment banker, Sarah the spoiled Jewish princess and Hector the Puerto Rican “vigilante” are firmly placed in the contexts of race, family and work, so that we seem to know them—though, as Kovel admits, it's impossible even after years of analysis for an analyst to “know” his patient. What he knows instead is the special, complex product of the analytic situation, a product not merely observed by the analyst but shared by him too. Psychoanalysis in this view is no cure, because

there is no disease; psychoanalysis is “a moral practice of a certain kind that people pursue because they value the life associated with it.” It belongs to art and general culture, not to science, and perhaps its real result isn't health or even ordinary unhappiness but only well-told stories.

In the end, Kovel acknowledges that there can be no such thing as Marxist psychotherapy, but he maintains that there can be a therapy compatible with Marxism—“a transcendent therapy, one predicated on the movement toward universality.” His contribution to this therapy of the future is centered on the concepts of desire and praxis—the one a transhistorical phenomenon distilled in the analytic session, the other the history-making activity itself. Desire (from Freud) and praxis (from early Marx) negate each other but define each other in the process. Their relation is dialectical; transcendent therapy would recognize itself as the “discourse of desire,” the intersection of the timeless with time. It would neither reify the psyche (as establishment psychoanalysis does) nor reduce it to a byproduct of history (as hard-core Marxism tends to do).

Transcendent therapy, that is, would encounter the whole individual in all his aspects, including his lack of wholeness and his failed individuation. It would also encounter the analyst—not as a faceless observer or a blank slate for transference but as an equal participant. The most remarkable feature of *The Age of Desire* is Kovel's strong presence in it. He doesn't instruct us in a theory; he lets us watch the theory grow. Of the many good stories he tells, this intellectual adventure—with all its dead ends and shortcuts intact—is the best. For the most part, *The Age of Desire* shouldn't be considered a shrink-book but the autobiography of a mind—quirky, abrupt, impetuous, but never less than admirable, a mind that narrates desire and also testifies to it.

The final question to ask of any book that proposes a drastic change in things as they are must be, of course, what chance is there that such a change will ever take place? While I can't help admiring Kovel's aim and his energy, I'm skeptical of his chances. Present-day psychotherapy is so lucratively tamed that no single call, however eloquent, is likely to transform it into an assailant of the very structures that keep it fat and

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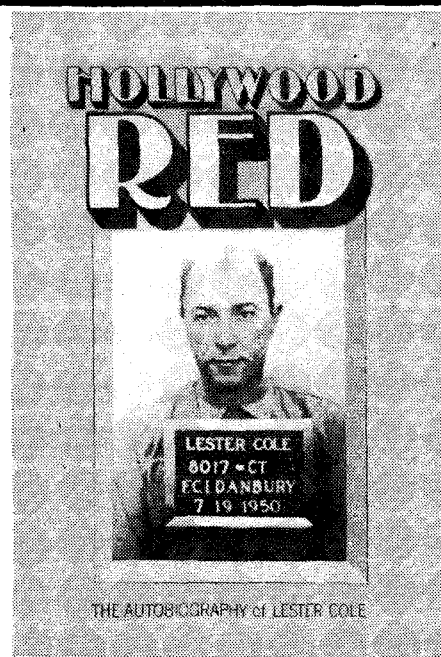
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sleek. "It is crucial," Kovel writes, "to face up to the state, to see how its bureaucracy embraces psychiatry and deadens it; to recognize its function on behalf of capital; and, of greatest importance, to struggle against it until it

makes good on the promise of democracy it would like to forget." I agree, but I'm outside the citadel. Inside, Joel Kovel will no doubt remain what he has been and is—a brilliant, permanent misfit. □

The Old Mysteries

SOL YURICK

LIFE ITSELF: Its Origin and Nature. By Francis Crick. Simon and Schuster. 192 pp. \$12.95.

With Robert Jastrow rallying the cosmologists around God, Carl Sagan throwing messages into outer space, the philosophical physicists wielding the Anthropic Principle and Francis Crick sperm-seeding the planets from a Higher Civilization, who needs the Creationists? Directed Panspermia indeed. Are we in the presence of a scientific breakthrough, or has Crick reverted to a hidden strain that haunts modern science: the rebirth of the Old Mysteries with a little expensive high-tech thrown in, the Gnostic-Cabalistic-Pythagorean mysteries run off on a computer?

Crick seeks to account for the origins of life. He comes up with less than a hypothesis, but more than a myth. He trots out for us a "Higher and Unimaginably Advanced Civilization" (HUAC) on another planet, maybe in another galaxy. Perhaps facing a cri-

sis (a depression, endless inflation, a poisoned environment, *Götterdämmerungen* of one sort or another), the citizens of the HUAC seek to propagate themselves. But the great reaches of space are untraversable by human beings. Unsure (as we are not sure) that there are other life-compatible planets, the HUAC folks send out space ships bearing hardy, space-colonizing bacteria to seed the universe. Among other places, these bacteria reach earth. Obviously. Look around you. The cycle starts all over again.

Crick tells us that the cycle of evolution is an inexorable given. It is inferred from our own anthology of geological strata. If you plant primitive, mutating, recombining protein, it must lead to human life. This conclusion rests on the notion that all life forms are related and are made from the same building blocks: acids, bases, enzymes and nucleotides. The genetic matter in human beings is structured into a double helix (reminiscent, don't you see, of the winged caduceus, two snakes twining a staff), for which discovery Crick got his Nobel Prize.

The method of inquiry Crick and others use goes something like this: We are here. How did we get here? Are we unique? Their form of scientific reasoning always requires repetition and redundancy, and cannot deal with the privileged status of any one event, form or being. For this reason, an accidental and one-time-only combination of elements in a primal soup on *one* planet in *one* solar system in *one* galaxy is unacceptable to scientists. If we have privileged status, we sail too close to God and Creationism.

The elements that go into the modern scientist's vision of life's origins consist of (1) the Big Bang explosion from a dimensionless point with infinite mass, (2) the expanding universe, (3) the cooling and coalescing of the primal plasma into galaxies, stars, planets, (4) a plenitude of galactic forms, including many hospitable solar systems like our

own (although there is no evidence that there are any other planets anywhere else) and (5) the ascendant and evolving path that protein takes, guided by the informative gene, combining, recombining, mutating. Crick and others use these basic elements to begin what is, in fact, a sort of logical-scholastic search, not so much of the evidence but of their collective unconscious.

The universe, we are told, is some twelve and one half billion years old. Our own evolutionary path has taken us about four and a half billion years. Given the principle of plenitude, redundancy (or Abounding Grace), there is room in this schema for not one but *two*, maybe two and a half, evolutionary ascents. Crick, the cosmologists and the deterministic evolutionists throw billions of years around with ease; they convert energy into space, space into numbers, fold it, puncture it with white and black holes; they dilate or contract time, predict and retrodict, model on their computers, which crunch the unimaginable numbers for them with ease. But if they can play these games, why can't one accept the Creationist God, who did it all from His dimensionless spore with infinite energy and time and matter at His disposal?

To arrive at the macro and micro ends of things, where the numbers, particles and forces are unimaginably large or small, science has proceeded by drawing a series of analogues from an extremely limited series of observations. Was there a Big Bang? And thus an expanding, evolving universe? And thus the path of evolution? The Big Bang theory arises from evidence of the Red Shift (shall we gain some political hope here?); all things in the universe recede from one another at a certain rate of speed. The expanding universe is reinforced by background microwave radiation left over from that primal event. Eons of time are inferred from a very few years of observation. But the Red Shift and the background radiation are open to question; contradictory evidence has arisen. Fundamental atomic particle theory is in trouble. In fact, *every* theoretical construct of basic science is in deep, deep trouble. Do we retrodict, retro-calculate to beginnings in order to come up with something that rationalizes the present? And if so, Crick's elaborate panspermatic notion comes crashing down.

I have never read a book so full of hesitating and qualifying words, so

Sol Yurick is the author of The Bag and The Warriors. His most recent novel, Richard A., is forthcoming from Arbor House.

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many *uncertains, may, may not haves, not yet documented* (how do you document unimaginable forces and eons of time other than by analogy?), *mights, possibly, strongly suspected* . . . Clearly, Crick is uncomfortable about his whole notion. Are we in the presence of the sky gods impregnating the earth gods once again? The cosmogonic egg?

Crick insists that his theory is neither myth nor science fiction:

The plain fact is that the myths of yesterday, which our forebears regarded not as myths, but as the living truths have collapsed, and while we are uncertain whether we can successfully use any of the remaining fragments, they are too rickety to stand as an organized body of beliefs.

But he proceeds to use these fragments of another old True Religion.

Certain aspects of faith were seemingly defeated in the war between Science and Religion. But an underground tradition of hermetic wisdom, gnosis and cabala survived and seeped into modern mathematics, logic, theoretical science and information theory. Descartes was a God-loving Rosicrucian. Newton was *first* an alchemist and astrologer and *then* a scientist. Can we take his calculations out of context? Leibniz was obsessed with yin-yang (binary logic) and the *I Ching*. And so it went.

Gnostic-cabalistic thought holds with the notion that the universe is a function of secret knowledge. "In the beginning was the word and the word was made flesh," says that most gnostic of the Gospels, John's. In the beginning was the genetic "word," which makes the flesh, say the geneticists. The body is merely the container, the relay, for endlessly transmitting the genetic message. When you mistake information games for reality, you're in trouble.

Why do scientists like Crick write such silly books? What's at stake? Money, power, funding, research grants, equipment (space probes and radio telescopes), prestige, the restoration of design, order and hierarchy into a capital-disordered universe.

One day, perhaps soon, we are going to make contact with the citizens of HUAC. And when we do, we are going to find that their signals are being broadcast from the same old places—from Citicorp, from Chase Manhattan Bank, from I.B.M., from A.T.&T., from the more mystic reaches of the international intelligence community. We

will find that these Laputans, these Merchants of Light, have reflected their messages to us from mirrors planted in the minds of the Sagans, the Dicks, the Clarkes, the Jastrows and the Cricks.

Perhaps Crick could be persuaded to exchange his Nobel Prize for a ceremonial magician's hat: he already has the two-snaked staff. □

THEATER.

RICHARD GILMAN

Grownups

One of the critic's most difficult tasks is to try to overturn the prevailing view that a particular piece of work is comic or, for that matter, tragic. I remember Walter Kerr attempting to demonstrate that Ionesco wasn't a funny writer by quoting passages from one of his plays. They were hilarious. I remember too a Charles Addams cartoon that shows the interior of a theater filled with people displaying grief-stricken expressions. And then—the eye discovers it after a while in the middle of a row—there's a single face with a wide, delighted grin.

With the emotions reversed, mine is that face vis-à-vis Jules Feiffer's *Grownups*. But my tears in the midst of others' laughter have nothing to do with misreading a comedy as a tragedy; they spring from renewed despair about our theater and our critics. For I think the acclaim for *Grownups* has been largely imposed from above, drummed up in the media without much evidence of popular approval. The night I attended the play, the audience didn't laugh all that often, and then only dutifully; the enthusiasm was all in the reviews, blown up and displayed on the theater's facade. (That the play is having problems at the box office would seem to support my theory.)

Now, as I've said, to establish in the face of the rave notices—"savagely funny"; "makes laughter an adventure"; "ferocious farce"; "you'll laugh yourself silly"—that *Grownups* isn't funny, and is in fact a wretched piece of theater in every respect, is exceedingly difficult. But someone must try.

Feiffer's play centers on the relationship of a thirtyish couple to each other and to the man's parents, and is presumably about self-discovery within marriage and within the parent-child

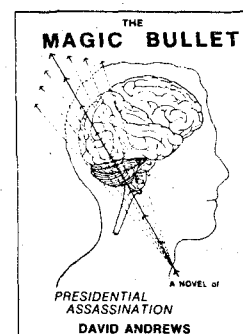
connection. Though there are no last names and the given ones are neutral—Helen, Jack, Louise, etc.—there's no mistaking the play's psychic, social and literary ground: Jewish households are the arena, and Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* is the artistic model.

From the opening scene in a *House and Garden* kitchen in New Rochelle, the play introduces every cliché of Jewish domestic reality, and no doubt of Protestant or Catholic domestic reality as well. My quarrel here is with the lack of originality, whatever the milieu. The best definition of a cliché I know is that it's a *no longer useful truth*, yet *Grownups* and its typical journalistic admirers mistake clichés of this sort for animate wisdom.

Is it useful to the imagination to encounter once again mothers who treat their 35-year-old sons as if they were 10, fathers who fret about their married daughters being out after dark and whose sons tell them that "we've never had a conversation in our lives," parents whose concern for their grown children is fixed on the latter's economic status? Can we really be enlivened by mothers who sniff at the housekeeping capabilities of their daughters-in-law? Is it diverting to hear an adult say of a

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child's drawing (the younger couple have a 9- or 10-year-old daughter) that "it looks just like me," only to be told that "it's supposed to be a cow"?

In the second act the scene changes to an apartment in New York City, while the theme shifts to marital discord. But the clichés keep coming. Here they're cant words and phrases from the current lexicon of pseudosophistication: the characters speak of being "undermined," of not wanting to play "power games"; they talk of having failed to make their marriage "work." The younger couple's quarrel mounts in verbal frenzy, but there's no emotional furor, no emotional life at all. Everything is arbitrary; nothing in the relationship or the play moves or grows, nothing is revealed. There's only a dull, heavy insistence, a repetitiveness of language and gesture that testifies to a radical poverty of invention and a consequent reliance on the *situation itself*, as though drama inevitably arose from the given. But it doesn't: sit-coms do.

In the final scene, the husband tells his wife he's leaving her—just like that. He also tells his parents, over on a visit, that they've been criminally delinquent in their treatment of him, that he's finally come to see the truth, and (the ultimate blow: "You're killing us," his mother wails) that he's leaving *The New York Times*, for whom he's been a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter. What's intended here no doubt is some pro-

found gesture of liberation. But as the curtain comes down with the son intoning "I'm quitting *The Times*, I'm quitting *The Times*," while the others stand frozen in horror, one laughs freely for the first time. There's been no farce before this; but if that ending isn't farcical, I can't imagine what might be. □

FILMS.

GREG MITCHELL

In Our Water

Frank Kaler, a house painter in South Brunswick, New Jersey, lives with his wife and four children in a red brick house adjacent to the Jones Industrial Service landfill, a mammoth disposal site for chemical waste. The Kalers moved to this rural spot, just east of Princeton, in 1964, to raise pigs and geese and to plant a pesticide-free garden. When pungent odors from enormous sunken tubs filled with toxic chemicals drifted across their property, the Kalers were annoyed, but they were not alarmed.

Then, in the spring of 1975, Frank Kaler noticed that his tap water smelled bad, like the air outside. The water was

Greg Mitchell is the author of Truth and Consequences: Seven Who Would Not Be Silenced (Dembner Books).

also off-color and oily. When his wife cooked vegetables, they turned black; pasta practically disintegrated when it was boiled. The children broke out in strange rashes after they showered.

Kaler, an easygoing man, would not drink the water, and he refused to swallow his fate. He set out on a five-year crusade to clean up his tap water and close down the nearby landfill.

This story has a familiar ring to it in 1982, but there is nothing routine about *In Our Water*, a documentary on the Kaler case directed by Meg Switzgable. In the wake of the events at Love Canal and the frequent newspaper reports about communities besieged by chemicals, *In Our Water* is hardly a revelation. But it is the most graphic—and at the same time the most personally engaging—depiction of the fact that when toxic chemicals are buried, the cover-up has just begun. *In Our Water* is instructive, and it is depressing, but it is also inspiring. For in the end, Frank Kaler, an "ordinary" person, has done something extraordinary—not for, but *to*, himself.

Dozens of independent documentaries are made every year, but few command the attention *In Our Water* is getting. It has been praised by Ralph Nader and Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey. It has been selected to represent the United States at the Berlin Film Festival. After its run at the Film Forum in Manhattan ends on January 20, it will be shown in theaters across the country and on public television.

Switzgable, 26, started the film in 1977 shortly after county and state officials had tested Kaler's water and said it was safe to drink. When Kaler took a sample to an independent lab, he was told it was contaminated with inorganic chemicals. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection would not confirm this finding, so Kaler went to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, which said there were *organic* chemicals in the water as well. One official said: "This isn't water—it's cleaning fluid."

The Kaler home was then hooked up to a municipal well, but a few months later this line was shut down because the water was found to be contaminated. Then Kaler began to suspect that there were also radioactive wastes in the landfill. Four years later, he finally persuaded the state to test the water in local wells, and the tests indicated there was more radiation than Federal standards

JOGGING IN THE PARLOR, REMEMBERING A SUMMER MOMENT DURING SNOW SQUALLS

Snow in wind-sheering afternoon light swirls and at the end of the lane's slate thickly muffled—it stands,

slides, winks

into an eye, into the window looks for an instant where I have been jogging off fat. Panting back, dizzy with comic self-creation, I see it and stop. Or

does it see?

Still it holds wet-bright as that noon of summer, then shakes a little all over, a kind of speech, an eye-blink fallen near me out of the memory of leaves, a dazzling imprint

of all when I was nothing. Is this only snow-spume, like words, or something's seething? I know in the brain

is a bloodless white-out

you can run back to, and wake in the dirt, in the world of a sudden gone hair-stiff and rank. It lifted my snout and my thick hackles. But what was it? An eye only, shimmering? An air-rattler? And what is this

but time's delight in parody?

Dave Smith

for drinking water allow. The state said that the Federal standards were too stringent.

Finally, in 1981, the landfill was closed by court order. The owners are currently seeking permission to reopen the facility. But, like thousands of other chemical dump sites littered across the landscape of industrial America, the landfill continues to leak toxic chemicals into ground water.

For a film of this type—made in stop-and-start fashion (as grants became available) over a four-year period—*In Our Water* is remarkably well done. The colors are vivid, and the scenes shift effortlessly from talking heads to shots of Kaler in his garden or testifying before a Congressional committee in Washington. One sequence follows him into the office of a state environmental official for a comic/pathetic showdown. Switzgable has the knack of catching officials in embarrassing and revealing moments, and she is tough enough to put them in the film.

In the wake of the Reagan Administration's dismantling of the E.P.A., it is especially important that the film be widely circulated. Switzgable would like to see it used as an "organizing tool." What one carries away from *In Our Water*, however, is not the film's final image of dirty tap water dripping into a sink but the picture of a once-conservative house painter trying to come to grips with his disillusionment in the American system. "I used to tell my kids," Frank Kaler says, "when we went to the parades, 'Take off your hat, this is your flag, your country.' Today I teach my kids that they can buy their share of American justice if they have enough money. That the laws are made by the rich and powerful to protect the rich and the powerful, and the richest and most powerful in this country today are the industrialists. They run this country."

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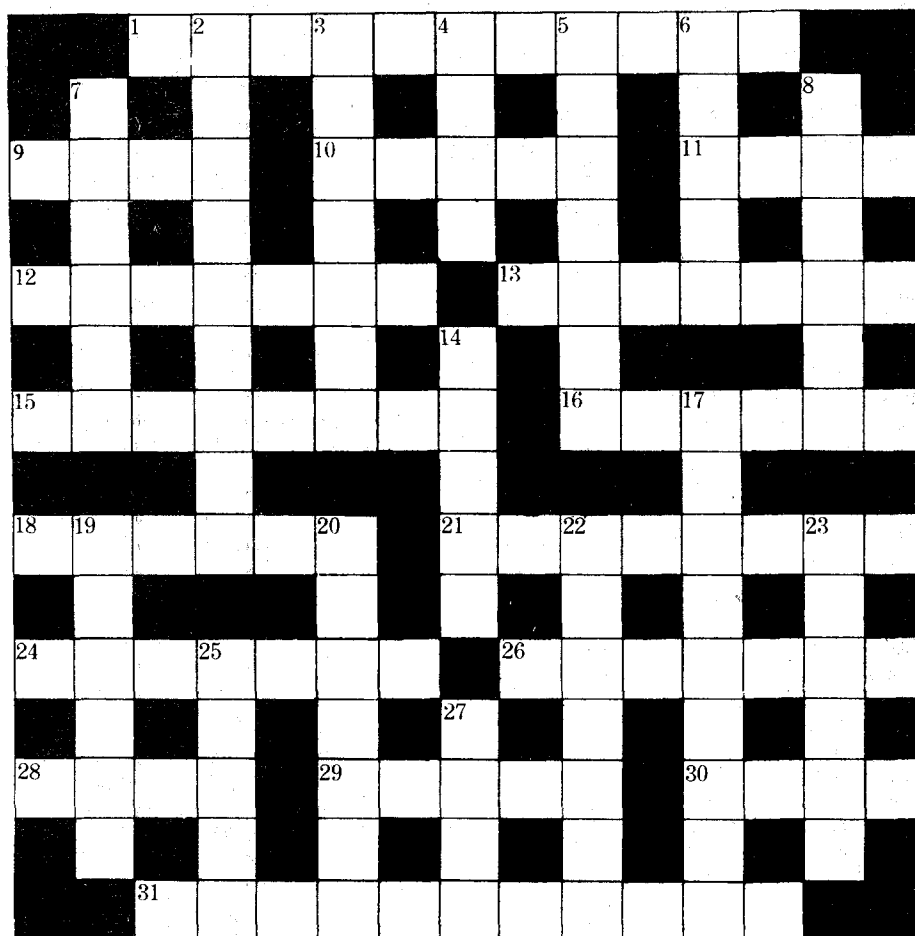
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Crossword Puzzle No. 1900

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

- 1 Something has to fall before they can go. (11)
- 9 and 10 The range of an ethereal creature may be studied carefully by those who view things from below. (9)
- 11 See 3
- 12 One might expect to find it underfoot after a shower, as well. (7)
- 13 What happens when the neon fails sometimes? You might have listened to the program before this. (4-3)
- 15 One is so indebted to Mr. Franklin when he gets old inside, inside. (8)
- 16 The old unpopular settler was some bird! (6)
- 18 Uncovers this partly to understand, and partly to eat. (4,2)
- 21 What's the point to 5 being so much further north? (8)
- 24 Something reputedly deadly to stop on the road, perhaps . . . (7)
- 26 . . . or somewhat lethal, if axed in the city. (7)
- 28 Something to eat is manufactured back here. (4)
- 29 Perhaps caused by 31, but said to be excellent. (5)
- 30 A minute part of this is like a heavenly creature when one is missing. (4)
- 31 The quality of some peanut products? (11)

show up? (9)

- 3 and 11 Such things might bear a sign that the press is not invited. (4,3,4)
- 4 Danny Kaye's ill wind. (4)
- 5 Associated with certain old people—i.e., brain damage. (7)
- 6 Dickensian character at first—sort of wide, but going to a point. (5)
- 7 Two of the most common verbs act this way. (6)
- 8 Possibly involves drawing a singular crook of fiction? (6)
- 14 What some do to the teeth, as shown by the sign as held here. (5)
- 17 See 19
- 19 and 17 They are reputedly hard to fill at the table. (6,9)
- 20 Is Tom from Warsaw reputedly unpopular? (7)
- 22 Besmirch, showing an absence of something in the character of Mr. Gunn. (7)
- 23 One might not expect to find such a counter in a truly Western store. (6)
- 25 Poet associated in the minds of some with Ruth. (5)
- 27 It did certain lovers sunder in MND. (4)

DOWN

- 2 Is she boring, perhaps, when those next door

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